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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

Fall 2004

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2004 Federal Duck Stamp Contest: And the Winner Is...

Wildlife artist Mark Anderson, from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was announced the winner in the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest on October 5. Anderson's acrylic painting of two male hooded mergansers (on the cover) bested 223 other entries and will grace the 2005–2006 Federal Duck Stamp, which goes on sale July 1, 2005.

This is Anderson's first win. Anderson has missed only one contest entry since 1985, although his entries have been highly ranked several times. Anderson has also won 15 state conservation stamp art contests in the states of Florida, Iowa, Oklahoma, Ohio and South Dakota. His work was featured on the National Turkey Stamp in 2003. Anderson was the winner of the National Wild Turkey Federation 1998 Grand National Art Competition, and the Ducks Unlimited's Artist of the Year in Oklahoma 2005 and South Dakota 2004.

"I'm sitting on cloud nine right now," said Anderson soon after Secretary Norton called to inform him of his victory.

The sale of Federal Duck Stamps raises approximately \$25 million each year to fund waterfowl habitat acquisition for the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Federal Duck Stamp Contest is sponsored each year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Duck Stamp second-place award goes to Jim Hautman. Pictured is a wood duck.

All waterfowl hunters age 16 and older are required to purchase and carry Duck Stamps. Ninety-eight percent of the proceeds from the \$15 Duck Stamp goes into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which purchases wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The Federal Duck Stamp Contest is the nation's longest running federally-sponsored art competition. No cash prize is awarded, but winning can boost the professional reputation of a previously unknown wildlife artist. Winning artists stand to make hundreds of thousands of dollars from the sale of limited editions of prints of their Duck Stamp designs.

Anderson is very active in conservation. He is a life sponsor of Ducks Unlimited and the National Wild Turkey Federation. He is also a member of Pheasants Forever. "I grew up hunting and fishing, that's where I get the inspiration. When I am outside, I can look at something and see five paintings," he said.

Second place went to Jim Hautman of Chaska, Minnesota, with an acrylic of a pair of wood ducks. Hautman has won the contest three times. His brothers Joseph and Bob have each won the contest twice. Third place went to Don Moore of Monona, Wisconsin, for an acrylic of a male hooded merganser.

*Nicholas Throckmorton, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



Duck Stamp third-place award goes to Don Moore. Pictured is a hooded merganser.

Ducks Unlimited Signs on to License Duck Stamp

Ducks Unlimited has assumed management of licensing Federal Duck Stamp images to manufacturers who place the images on a wide variety of consumer products.

"We're excited to have DU manage our Duck Stamp licensing program and the potential it will have to provide even more money for wetlands conservation," Service Director Steve Williams said. "I am confident that this agreement will help us fulfill the goal announced by President Bush of conserving three million acres of wetlands across the nation over the next five years."

Since 1934, the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, popularly known as the Federal Duck Stamp, has been sold to hunters, conservationists and stamp collectors. In that time, stamp sales have generated more than \$670 million that has been used to acquire more than 5.2 million acres of important wetlands and associated upland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Recognizing the stamps' popularity with the public, Congress authorized the Service to license stamp images for use on a variety of products in 1984, with proceeds going to acquire additional habitat for the Refuge System. Since that time, dozens of licensed products ranging from embroidered hats and sweatshirts to knives, keychains and prints have been successfully marketed by private companies across the country.

United States Reauthorizes North American Waterfowl Management Plan

By engaging the professional marketing and licensing expertise of DU, the Service hopes to take full advantage of the valuable stamp images to generate more money for conservation and raise public awareness of the Duck Stamp itself.

Under the agreement, DU will help the Service broaden the awareness of Federal Duck Stamps and the role they play in past, current and future conservation efforts. Like DU's current licensing programs that raise money for waterfowl and habitat, royalties generated from the sale of products with the stamp images will be dedicated to waterfowl conservation efforts.

"DU and its members share our strong commitment to wetlands conservation, and understand the values that the Duck Stamp represents," said DU's Executive Vice President Don Young.

Williams added, "The Service has a long history of partnership with DU on wetlands conservation projects, and we look forward to deepening this partnership through our licensing program."

Nicholas Throckmorton, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Interior Secretary Gale Norton reaffirmed the United States' commitment to international waterfowl conservation efforts by signing an update to the North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The plan is a public-private approach to manage waterfowl in Canada, Mexico and the United States. Partners have invested more than \$2.2 billion to protect, restore or enhance more than 8 million acres of habitat in the plan's history.

With final approval from the Canadian and Mexican environmental ministries, the 2004 North American Waterfowl Management Plan—Strengthening the Biological Foundations will guide the three countries in waterfowl conservation. The plan calls on the partners to manage sustainable landscapes, consult and cooperate with partners and use strong biological foundations to make decisions.

Partners' conservation projects not only advance waterfowl conservation but also make substantial contributions toward the conservation of all wetland-associated species.

The plan is international in scope, projects to advance the plan goals take place at regional and local level. Success is dependent upon the strength of Joint Ventures, which involve federal, state, provincial, tribal, and local governments; businesses; conservation organizations; and individual citizens. Presently, there are 11 habitat Joint Ventures in the United States and three in Canada. Three additional Joint Ventures have been formed to address monitoring and research needs for black ducks, sea duck sand arctic geese.

The original plan established an international committee from each of the three countries. The committee provides a forum for discussion of major, long-term international waterfowl issues and makes recommendations to directors of the three countries' national wildlife agencies.

The U.S. delegation to the plan committee consists of two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representatives and one state representative from each of the four flyway councils. Canada's six delegates represent the federal and provincial governments. In Mexico, delegates represent the federal government, universities and nonprofit conservation organizations.

The specific goals of the plan are to establish continental waterfowl conservation objectives and priorities (for example, in the surveyed area, the breeding bird population objective is 8.2 million for mallards); to increase stakeholder confidence in the direction of waterfowl conservation; and to guide partners in strengthening the biological foundation of North American waterfowl conservation.

Nicholas Throckmorton, Public Affairs, Washington, DC



Fish Passage Program Booms



Swim Right Up. *The 11-foot high Lower Mill Pond dam on the Mill Brook River in Connecticut is a barrier to migrating American eels. Thanks to the construction of a 20-foot eel pass, the eels will be collected, counted and hand-carried over the dam by employees of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The eelpass opens a half-mile of habitat and represents one type of passage project that benefits aquatic species. FWS photo.*

With outside funding nearly matching Service funding dollar-for-dollar, the Service hopes to remove 91 barriers to fish passage in 26 states in the coming year.

Service funds for the popular Fish Passage Program, amounting to \$2.8 million, will be supplemented by another \$2 million in matching funds from a wide array of partners ranging from civic and conservation organizations, local and State governments and other Federal agencies.

Since 2001, the Fish Passage Program has removed 158 barriers across the country, restoring natural flows and fish migration.

Fish Passage works to remove obstructions in waterways that prevent fish from reaching spawning grounds or historic habitat. Projects can be as small as inserting culverts under roads or railroad

tracks or as large as the removal last February of the 95-year-old Embrey Dam near Fredericksburg by a military explosives team.

Many of the small dams targeted for removal date as far back as the American and Industrial Revolutions. Those dams were built either to accommodate early barge traffic or to provide power or irrigation for a young country. As times changed, many of the dams were abandoned but remained in place, serving only to block populations of fish and contributing to their gradual decline.

Completion of the 2004 projects will open 19,364 acres and more than 3,048 miles of waterways for fish, contributing to larger populations and more recreational fishing opportunities.

*Ken Burton, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Prescribed Fire Cuts Insurance Premiums

Homeowners in the St. Tammany Fire Protection District #3 in Lacombe, Louisiana have enjoyed a savings of five to ten percent on insurance premiums since February, due in part to wildland fire prevention actions taken by Big Branch Marsh National Wildlife Refuge north of New Orleans.

The U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior are jointly working to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildland fire under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act enacted in 2003.

The effort gives fire agencies and communities additional tools to address wildland fire risks. Over the past two years, the Service has provided the St. Tammany Fire District #3 with \$10,000 in Rural Fire Assistance grants to train and equip professional and volunteer fire fighters in wildland firefighting techniques. St. Tammany Parish historically has been one of the two parishes in Louisiana with the most wildfires, according to the State of Louisiana Office of Forestry.

“The working relationship between St. Tammany Fire Protection District #3 and the Service over the past few years has been great,” District Fire Chief Flynn said. “Our unified command has been very efficient and worked well. We have helped them and they have helped us in so many ways. We have both provided training and resources to each other. Their grant program has been a blessing for much needed equipment in the amount of \$10,000 over the last three years. I look forward to a long-term relationship with the Service and the possibility of a mutual aid agreement very soon.”

A recent review of the community’s Insurance Service Office fire rating, which provides the insurance industry with information about fire risk, demonstrated that the community assistance provided by the Service has significantly reduced the risk of devastating wildland fires in the community.

A Raven's Story Echoes in Cyberspace

This reduced risk helped result in a drop of the ISO rating in the Tammany Fire District #3 from five to three, with the possible savings of five to ten percent on insurance premiums for homeowners within the fire district. The ISO insurance rating uses a 1–10 scale, and is based on equipment, volunteer or paid firefighters, response time, water availability and other factors. A local insurance agent's quote on a \$100,000 house indicated that the owner could see savings of \$110 annually. The median home price in Lacombe is \$107,000 according to the St. Tammany Economic Development Office. The population of the fire district is 7,518, with 3,119 households and 180 businesses. District-wide, the cumulative savings in insurance premiums for the estimated 3,000 households within the fire district totals \$330,000. The Fire District has increased numbers of paid staff, equipment and training, which also contributed to the insurance rate reduction.

Wildland-urban interface projects such as prescribed burning and mechanical treatments help protect the community from hazardous fuel buildup. Prescribed burning is a management tool to help restore forests and endangered species habitat, as well as reduce fuel loads that could encourage wildfires. While maintaining wildland firefighting staff and equipment to manage wildland fire on a complex of seven refuges, the Service also helps protect nearby communities such as Lacombe.

Last year, Sami Gray, fire control officer for Southeast Louisiana Refuges, received a National Fire Plan award in the "Implementation of the National Fire Plan" category. In 2002, more than 4,000 acres of the refuge complex were successfully treated, restoring the largest acreage ever for the refuge. The Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex is located in an urban area where 100-acre parcels or 400-acre parcels are burned at a time.

*Tom MacKenzie, Public Affairs,
Atlanta, Georgia & Byron Fortier,
Louisiana Refuges*

What began as an effort to tap native lore to assist in white-fronted goose studies has turned into an online oral history project, with the memories of 24 elders in the Koyukon region of western Alaska. It is now available online for use by researchers, educators and the public through the University of Alaska Oral History Program.

The project began in 1995 when Service biologist Mike Spindler, stationed in Galena, decided to investigate traditional knowledge as part of a wildlife study to determine why the white-fronted goose population had declined along the Koyukuk. Spindler asked elders to recall and describe goose abundance and habitat conditions, information which was not available from other sources because no formal waterfowl studies had occurred in the area before the 1950s. Spindler later expanded the project by interviewing elders who were known as subsistence experts in each of the villages along the lower Koyukuk and middle Yukon Rivers. Between 1995 and 2003, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff interviewed these elders about their subsistence use of wildlife and fish species using a standardized questionnaire, but the elders had more to offer.

"Most of the elders really wanted to share their stories," said Spindler. "This program has developed into a model of how people can work together to combine western science and traditional knowledge to better our understanding of subsistence."

"It's truly priceless. Raven's Story is an invaluable resource for KIIYU, and all Community Radio of Alaska stations, in our efforts to keep Alaska Native stories and knowledge alive and on the airwaves."

KIIYU General Manager Shadow Steel

The project also coincided with a need for locally-originated programming at the regional public radio station, KIIYU, in Galena. Working together, the Service and KIIYU used the 24 elders' interviews to produce 371 episodes of *Raven's Story*, a continuing series of short stories tailor-made to air on KIIYU and several other public radio stations in Alaska. *Raven's Story* documents elders' stories, observations and experiences relating to wildlife, fish and subsistence in the Koyukon Region.

Reining In the "Horsemen"

In mid-July the Service made \$140,000 in emergency grants to stop the illegal slaughter of elephants and rhinoceros in Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo along the country's border with Sudan.

The grants went to the non-profit International Rhino Foundation, which is leading the effort to stop poaching by Sudanese poachers, known as "the horsemen," who kill the elephants and rhinos to acquire ivory and horns for sale on the black market. The Sudanese horsemen have killed almost 1,000 elephants in the past year and are on the verge of eliminating the last wild population of northern white rhinos. The emergency grants will help train and equip park rangers and allow aerial surveillance by anti-poaching teams.

Garamba rangers are overwhelmed by the heavily armed poachers, and two rangers were killed while defending the park.

In April, park rangers sighted a poacher on horseback, six armed men on foot and approximately 25 donkeys with heavy packs. In their wake, the rangers found 12 dead elephants and two rhinos with ivory tusks and horns removed.

The grants were issued through the Service's "Wildlife Without Borders" program that administers funds appropriated by Congress for conservation of wild animals and their natural habitats. A grant of \$84,900 is being awarded under the African Elephant Conservation Fund; a second grant in the amount of \$55,400 is being awarded from the Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund. These grants cannot be used to purchase firearms.

The Service expects international conservation organizations and private donors to contribute as much as \$150,000 in additional support. The International Rhino Foundation is working in partnership with other organizations such as Conservation International, the International Elephant Foundation, Save the Rhino International, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the Frankfurt Zoological Society, the World Wildlife Fund, the Zoological Society of London, the World Bank and the United Nations Foundation-UNESCO.

In 1980, Garamba National Park was established by the United Nations as a "World Heritage Site," and in 1996, a "World Heritage Site in Danger."

Patricia Fisher, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

A Grand Opening for Conservation—Partnerships, promotions, participation!

The Bass Pro Shops Grand Opening in September at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina exemplified the spirited meanings of the terms. The National Wildlife Refuge System was recognized with store exhibits, refuge guides at checkouts, and merchandise bags displaying FWS and NWR system logos. 26 FWS employees and 19 volunteers donated 630 hours of service during the first three days of the Grand Opening. Bass Pro Shops will donate an estimated \$30,000 to Waccamaw NWR. The generous donation will be used to open up the refuge's first nature trail system, including a canoe launch facility, the first of its kind on the Waccamaw River. Store Manager Greg Martin, a Georgetown native and avid outdoorsman, will work closely with Waccamaw NWR to promote refuge programs. In conjunction with filming the Grand Opening, Bass Pro Shops filmed a segment profiling Waccamaw NWR and refuge partners. The footage is expected to air this fall on the Bass Pro Shops TV program. Pictured here are refuge manager Craig Sasser and biologist Gary Phillips. FWS photo by Jane Griess.



Hurricanes Slash the Southeast

Within weeks of each other, Charley, Francis, Ivan and Jeanne left their calling cards in a wake of destruction spanning the majority of the Southern Coastal States. Although the final tally or costs of destruction is not in, estimates of loss just to Service facilities in the Southeast Region will surpass \$40 million.

The devastation brought on by the storms not only wrought havoc on the human population, but was responsible for considerable damage levied on National Wildlife Refuges in Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Kentucky, Puerto Rico and Florida.

Winds and flooding damaged buildings, housing and utility buildings, while uprooted trees downed power lines and debris blocked roads and gates at various refuges. Wildlife impacts are expected to include loss of Alabama, Perdido Key and Choctawhatchee beach mice populations (all endangered species) due to severe



A refuge worker looks over coastal erosion that exposed piping such as these at Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge, north of Pelican Island, between Melbourne Beach and Wabasso Beach. This stretch of beach contains the most important nesting area for loggerhead sea turtles in the western hemisphere and the second most important in the world. FWS photo.

impacts to primary dune habitats. Sea turtle nests are most likely destroyed or buried due to beach erosions, inundation, or deposition of additional sand over the nests; additional impacts will undoubtedly be

experienced by other species, such as birds and small mammals from habitat loss from trees and other vegetation damaged by the high winds or erosion on riverbanks and streams. Aquatic species will be adversely impacted by additional sediments, effluents and contaminants washed into streams, lakes and the ocean.

Congress to Help Cover Storm Damage

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received approximately \$40.6 million in a supplemental appropriation approved by Congress to repair the massive damage inflicted on national wildlife refuges and other Service facilities by a series of hurricanes that battered the Southeast in August and September.

Having endured four back-to-back hurricanes, Service lands in Florida will receive about \$19.4 million, the largest single portion of the appropriation. Several national wildlife refuges in Florida were closed to the public in the wake of hurricane damage.

Indeed, Fish and Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams formally reopened the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Sanibel, Florida, on October 13. It had been closed since Hurricane Charley ripped through the area.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also received approximately \$3 million for its initial cleanup response to the storm. Scores of Service personnel, including law enforcement officers, helped Florida communities respond to the chaos and anguish caused by the

storms. The mayor of Sanibel, Florida, praised the Service's response, noting that road openings and cleanup that would have taken six to eight weeks was accomplished in a matter of days with the assistance of Service personnel.

Two national wildlife refuges—Bon Secour in Alabama and Merritt Island in Florida—were closed as repairs were made to ensure public safety and the protection of wildlife resources. Director Williams visited both of those Service facilities during a tour of damaged sites October 13–15 that also included Pelican Island and Archie Carr refuges and the Vero Beach Ecological Services office, all in Florida.

Other areas receiving supplemental funds for storm damage repairs in fiscal year 2004 are: Alabama, \$4.6 million; Wisconsin, \$4.3 million; Puerto Rico, \$2.9 million; Georgia, \$2.4 million; Guam, \$1.7 million; South Carolina, \$735,000; North Carolina, \$540,000; Mississippi 489,000; Washington state, \$335,000; Kentucky, \$308,000; and Louisiana, \$272,000.

Assessing the damage has been difficult. Emergency response crews including numerous Fish and Wildlife Service personnel worked around the clock supporting recovery efforts; however, the onslaught of these storms occurring immediately after each other, slowed damage assessment and the clean up process considerably. However, House and Senate conferees approved supplemental appropriations of more than \$40.5 million for Fish and Wildlife Service construction for damages in Florida, several other States and Puerto Rico.

Nikki Randolph, External Affairs, Washington, DC

Partnerships x 7: Federal Land Management Agency Head Roundtable

During the Joint Ventures Partners in Stewardship Conference in Los Angeles, CA, last November, leaders of the seven federal land management agencies signed a pledge to continue the collaborative interagency partnership sharing endeavors that began at the conference. To accomplish this, they formed a partnership roundtable and a multi-agency work group charged to build partnership capacity to elevate awareness of the value of our public lands and water and to increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans.

Under the auspices of the roundtable, various agency heads have met twice since the L.A. conference to discuss ways in which the agencies could join forces to tackle common issues. At their last meeting in July, the agency heads prioritized 32 common resource and management issues and voted to concentrate on the top four:

1) Roundtable Communication Mechanisms (sharing communications and keeping current); 2) Philanthropy (fund raising, consistency across agencies, legalities and donor recognition); 3) Water Issues (drought/sufficiency); and 4) Off-Highway Vehicles (common set of standards between agencies, education, land ethic focus).

Service Deputy Director Marshall Jones, who attended, remarked, "It was really beneficial to get the partnership perspective of the other agencies and I'm hopeful we can work together more closely to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in dealing with common resource issues."

Anita Noguera, National Outreach Coordinator, Arlington, Virginia



Lunchtime. *The sight of a 13 foot-long alligator is something south Georgia folks see occasionally, but few have seen one take an adult deer out to lunch. Actually — for lunch. Photographs of this deer-eating alligator were taken from the air by Terri Jenkins, a Service district fire manager who was preparing to ignite a prescribed fire at Harris Neck NWR, about 40 miles south of Savannah, Georgia, on March 4, 2004. The alligator will not be charged with hunting deer out of season.*

Piper Honored At Bozeman Fish Technology Center Dedication



Robert Piper, seated, is honored at a ribbon-cutting ceremony in a dedication of the new Piper Building, part of the Bozeman Fish Technology Center.

Robert G. Piper, the former director of the Service's Bozeman Fish Technology Center, was honored this summer at the dedication of a new 16,500-square-foot laboratory and administrative building named in his honor.

The Piper Building provides seven new state-of-the-art laboratories for a range of applications from organic and inorganic chemistry needed in fish nutrition and contaminants studies to fish physiology and necropsy necessary for fish reproduction and culture research. In addition, the Piper Building contains 13 offices, a library and conference rooms.

First Habitat Conservation Plan Gets Checkup

The Piper Building also features two large indoor aquaria and an outdoor pond viewing area for public education and enjoyment. Center Director Bill Krise would like to see the facility evolve into a place for tourists and local community groups to learn about the Service's fisheries program, and local fisheries research and conservation issues.

Currently, the Center assists in recovery of the pallid sturgeon in cooperation with Federal and State partners. The Center also maintains the only captive brood stock of fluvial Arctic grayling, native to the Big Hole River in Montana. Other projects the center is involved with include efforts to approve drugs for use on aquatic animals through the Food and Drug Administration, and research into effective, sustainable and economical fish feeds for use in conservation of sensitive fish species and recreational and commercial fisheries.

The Bozeman Fish Technology Center is located at the mouth of Bridger Canyon in Bozeman, Montana and is home to research programs for threatened and endangered fish reproduction and culture; the Aquatic Animal Drug Approval Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service trout nutrition program and several Montana State University research projects related to fisheries. The Service's Fisheries Management Assistance Office is also located at the Center.

Established in 1892, the Center is the site of one of the oldest Federal fish hatcheries in the country. In 1983, the site became the Bozeman Fish Technology Center; one of seven such technology centers nationwide intended to address fisheries conservation and management needs.

*Barb Perkins, Public Affairs,
Denver, Colorado*

Approved by the Service in 1983, the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) is the nation's oldest habitat conservation plan under the Endangered Species Act. It has had a tremendous benefit in preserving open space and habitat for rare species on the 3,600-acre San Bruno Mountain in northern San Mateo County. The mountain includes most of the remaining habitat for three endangered butterfly species—the mission blue, the callippe silverspot and the San Bruno elfin butterflies—and provides sanctuary for several other rare or protected plants and animals.

Now, the Service, in coordination with San Mateo County and the cities of Brisbane, Daly City and South San

Francisco, has begun a comprehensive environmental review for a proposed amendment to the HCP.

The goal of the amendment is to update and strengthen the plan to reflect changes and new information regarding species status, habitat preservation and species protection.

The update will consider adding four more species to the permit—the callippe silverspot butterfly, the threatened bay checkerspot butterfly, the San Francisco lessingia and the San Bruno Mountain manzanita.

*Jim Nickles and Al Donner,
Public Affairs, Sacramento, California*



Lingual Lure. The alligator snapping turtle uses its tongue to lure fish within reach of its massive jaws. But their numbers are declining; commercial harvest and habitat lost to impoundment of southern reservoirs have hit the turtle hard. Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery and Oklahoma State University have answered back, creating a captive population that's bearing fruit. Turtles captured from Sequoyah NWR have laid nearly 200 ping pong ball-sized eggs at the hatchery. They're incubated at OSU, and grown out at the hatchery where they will be fitted with radios and released in the wild. The partnership should yield data on habitat needs of the unusual turtle. FWS photo.

Refuge Hunting and Fishing Poised For Increase



New hunting and fishing site. Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge in Illinois is one of five refuges the Service opened to hunting and fishing. FWS photo: Ned Trovillian.

The Service opened five new hunting and fishing programs at national wildlife refuges in Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana and South Carolina. With that action, the Service permits hunting on 308 refuges and fishing on 220.

“With this proposal, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have launched more than 60 new hunting and fishing programs on national wildlife refuges since 2001, enhancing access and opportunity for millions of Americans to enjoy their favorite outdoor traditions,” Service Director Steve Williams said.

The Service added the following refuges to the agency’s list of units open for hunting and/or fishing: Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in South Carolina; Mountain Longleaf NWR in Alabama; Red River NWR in Louisiana; and Cypress Creek NWR in Illinois.

In addition, the Service also expand recreational hunting and fishing opportunities on seven refuges in Nebraska, Texas, Tennessee, Indiana, Louisiana, Georgia and South Carolina.

In 2003, there were 2.2 million hunting visits to national wildlife refuges and 6.6 million fishing visits. By law, hunting and fishing are two of the six priority wildlife-dependent recreational uses on national wildlife refuges, and individual refuges are encouraged to provide opportunities to hunt and fish whenever they are compatible with the refuge’s conservation goals. The Service annually reviews hunting and fishing programs on national wildlife refuges to determine whether to add, modify or remove them.

Steve Farrell, NWRS, Arlington, Virginia

Keeping Historic Waterways Invasive-Free

This year the nation celebrates the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, with many people, especially boaters, heading west to recreate parts of the explorers’ historic journey. But as boaters visit the West for this special celebration, they should be extra vigilant about cleaning their boats and trailers, where harmful zebra mussels and other invasive aquatic species can attach and live for days out of water.

To help curb the western invasion of zebra mussels and other nuisance aquatic species during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is distributing two public service announcements aimed at educating boaters and other travelers on ways to prevent spreading these unwanted species. These PSAs can be downloaded at www.protectyourwaters.net/USFW0404ClarkLewisCleaning_notag.mp3.

Produced through the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force’s 100th Meridian Initiative <100thmeridian.org> in partnership with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, these PSAs can help boaters understand the importance of preventing the spread of aquatic nuisance species. Well-known spokesmen Richard Kind and Patrick Warburton, television actors whose Clark and Lewis characters have been a part of Alaska/Horizon Airlines advertisements for years, share tips on how to clean your boat and gear before leaving your favorite body of water. Both PSAs are approximately one minute in length.

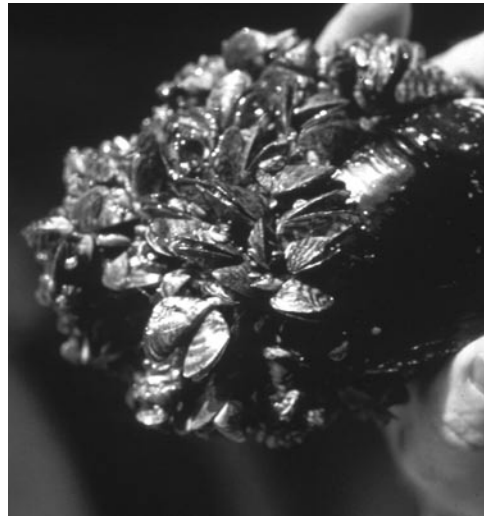
Zebra mussels are an exotic nuisance species native to the Caspian region of western Russia. They were most likely introduced to the United States in the late 1980s in the ballast water of a foreign vessel. Since then, they have wreaked havoc by damaging water intake equipment for cities, smothering native shellfish, covering recreational watercraft hulls, motors and more. Zebra mussels have recently shown up in El Dorado Reservoir in Kansas where they number in the millions. A biological survey in 2003 in the Missouri River below Ft. Randall Dam and below Gavins Point Dam in South Dakota identified zebra mussel larvae floating in the water as well.

Partner's Ranch Becomes Torstenson Family Wildlife Center

An estimated 6,300 plants and animals have been introduced to the United States. And while most of these non-native species are harmless, a small percentage leaves over a \$100 million trail of damage every year.

Through cooperative activities of its ANS Task Force, the Service works with other federal agencies, states, tribes and private landowners to prevent and control aquatic nuisance species.

*Tina Proctor/Barb Perkins,
External Affairs, Denver, Colorado*



Zebra mussels smother native mussels. *The zebra mussel was inadvertently introduced to the United States and is now spreading rapidly, impacting native fish species, as well as clogging power plant intakes. Boaters, anglers and waterfowl hunters can help prevent further spread of zebra mussels and other aquatic invasive species. FWS Photo.*



A gift in a large package. *As far as the eye can see, the Double-H Ranch provides an impressive landscape and awesome habitat. FWS photo: Larry Bell.*

In mid-August, the Double-H Ranch in Datil, New Mexico, became the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Torstenson Family Wildlife Center. The family of Bob Torstenson, a noted rancher and conservationist, granted the ranch to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation to be used specifically for hunting, fishing and environmental education.

The ranch lies in a grand landscape and is home to elk, mule deer, pronghorn, a pair of nesting golden eagles, numerous raptors and myriad other wildlife. Torstenson developed a wetland and small lake in a desert environment that has become home to migrating waterfowl and further provides visitors hunting and fishing opportunities.

"It is important to recognize the dedication to conservation and the spirit of partnership of Bob Torstenson and his family," Interior Secretary Gale Norton stated. "This generous gift represents one of the largest single contributions to conservation in recent times. I am pleased that the ranch will be managed by the Rocky Mountain

Elk Foundation and by the long-term commitment to partnership exhibited by the Mule Deer Foundation's conservation easement. I am also proud that the Fish and Wildlife Service is a part of this effort through our Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program."

"I could not think of a greater gift to leave than the gift of this rich landscape with its deer, elk and antelope. The opportunity this land provides for hunting, fishing and outdoor education will promote and preserve our conservation heritage. The Torstenson family members are the heart of this great venture and will always be known as true leaders in conservation and land management through cooperation," Norton said.

Bob Torstenson's vision, through the dedication of the wildlife center, marks a formal beginning of new concepts to be interpreted and passed to future generations.

*Victoria Fox, Public Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Environmental Justice for All

In 1982, North Carolina proposed to develop a landfill for PCB-contaminated soil in a predominately African-American community. Opposition to the proposal grew into a grass-roots movement that focused attention on environmental justice issues.

Previously, environmental justice advocates used civil rights law to address such issues in minority or low-income communities. For the most part, they were not successful. Fortunately, environmental laws themselves provide effective avenues to address any disparate impacts from polluters. Under the National Environmental Policy Act, for example, agencies must analyze and consider all the environmental effects, including human health and the economic and social effects of its actions including their effects on minority communities and low-income communities.

Environmental Justice is focused on the goal of making communities part of the environmental decision-making process.

Now, what began as a grass-roots movement, has become an Executive Order on Environmental Justice, which directs executive branches of Federal Government to integrate environmental justice into their programs and policies.

Within the Service, the environmental justice program is assigned to the Division of External Affairs with Regional teams formulated from a diverse pool of program offices. Even though the Service is a small agency in comparison to the Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies involved in implementing the Executive Order, it is playing a big role in the communities we serve.

In Rosebud, South Dakota the Service provided technical assistance to the Rosebud Sioux tribe on tribal wind power and protection of migratory birds. The Service is working with the Native Village of Selawik, Alaska, to remove hazardous waste through cleanup and closure of an existing dump site. In the Southeast, the Service is working with Puerto Rico to assist with training and support to communities on matters relating to water quality.

Like the other partnership programs that are flourishing in the Service, Environmental Justice is focused on the goal of making communities part of the environmental decision-making process.

According to Barry Hill, director of EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, the Environmental Justice Program is neither an affirmative action program nor a set-aside program for minority or low-income communities. The program goals are only achieved when everyone, regardless of race, culture, or income, enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and equal access to the decision making process.

As part of its efforts to address and reduce cumulative risks/impacts, the Service is using an "Environmental Justice Geographic Assessment Tool," that provides community-specific information and offers a new approach to addressing potential environmental justice issues.

In addition, the Service is working with state agencies to provide training sessions regarding their environmental justice responsibilities.

Kim Lambert, Environmental Justice Specialist, Arlington, Virginia

Exciting Detail Opportunity at The Wildlife Society

Service Director Steve Williams recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and The Wildlife Society that will launch an exciting new partnership between the three organizations. "This MOU," said Williams, "is another step toward achieving my personal priority of strengthening the Service's tradition of Scientific Excellence."

One of the key facets of this agreement is the commitment that the Service will solicit and select one of its superior scientists to serve in a detail assignment with The Wildlife Society (TWS), working in its Bethesda, Maryland office. Salary for the duration of the detail assignment will be provided through deferred allocation from the program in which the individual selected is employed. Any moving expenses or per diem will be contributed by the region or program from which they come. Candidates should be willing to serve for at least six months, and as long as two years. The individual will have the opportunity to work on a variety of crucial wildlife policy issues, and to play a leadership role in revitalizing our relationship with The Wildlife Society and with professional societies. The position will also be supported by up to \$50,000 in annual project funding from the USGS.

Each Regional and Assistant Director has been asked to solicit applications from their employees and to forward between one to five applications to Deputy Director, Marshall Jones, no later than January 1, 2005. The applications need only include a resume, a one-page personal statement outlining the applicant's expectations for this detail assignment (including an indication of the time period they will be available to serve), and up to three letters of recommendation. Applicants must be Service employees. The selection process will include Service, USGS and TWS employees.

For more information contact your Regional or Assistant Director or the Director's Senior Science Advisor, Dan Ashe.

Cindy Hoffman, External Affairs, Washington, DC

Ute Tribe Secures Grant to Support Native Fish Recovery



Fishery Biologist Jay Groves (left) will coordinate the Tribal wildlife management grant with support from Dave Irving, project leader, Utah Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance Office. FWS photo by Debbie Felker.

Northeast Utah is home to the Ute Indian tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation which consists of almost four million acres that encompass numerous waterways including the Duchesne, Green and White rivers where Colorado pikeminnow and razorback sucker have swum for millions of years. For the past five years, biologists with the Ute Indian tribe Fish and Wildlife Department have helped the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program conduct a variety of studies on tribal lands as part of efforts to recover these endangered fishes.

As soon as the tribe enters into a grant agreement with the Service this fall, it will begin work to develop a native fish management plan and outreach program

to further recover the endangered fishes and to protect another threatened native fish species—the Colorado River cutthroat trout.

The Ute tribe project is among 23 tribal projects nationwide to receive Tribal Landowners Incentive Program funds through the fiscal year 2003 Tribal wildlife grants program. The selection of the Ute program was announced in January. The tribe will use \$40,000 of its own funds to garner \$120,000 in federal funds.

The tribe's primary objectives are to establish a native fish management plan; supplement existing programs that provide for habitat protection and restoration; support recovery activities that benefit federally listed and proposed species and their habitat; and provide for Tribal and public awareness and support for native fish management activities.

"The native fish management plan will serve as a blueprint for activities and policies regarding Tribal management of all native fish species within Tribal jurisdiction," said Jay Groves, a fisheries biologist recently hired by the tribe to coordinate this Tribal wildlife management effort. "We will also develop a Tribal policy statement regarding endangered fish for inclusion in the Tribal fishing proclamation."

Another important component of the tribe's plans includes developing an education and outreach program for staff, Tribal members and the general public.

"Currently, support for the restoration of native fish among Tribal members is weak or non-existent," said Everett Manning, director, Ute tribe Fish and Wildlife Department. "The tribe is committed to teaching its members the value and importance of maintaining river habitat and healthy native fish populations."

"We have enjoyed a good working relationship with the tribe in the past and greatly appreciate their cooperation and assistance in recovering the endangered fishes," said Ralph Morgenweck, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional director for the Mountain-Prairie Region and chairman of the Recovery Program's Implementation Committee. "Developing and implementing a native fish management plan on Tribal lands will add continuity to projects being conducted off reservation by the Recovery Program."

Debbie Felker, Information and Education Coordinator, Denver, Colorado

Getting to the Bottom of the Great Lakes



Lake trout explore the depths of the great lakes. Illustration: Bob Hines.

In early August, the Service identified nine research projects focusing on the rehabilitation of sustainable fish populations in the Great Lakes basin and provided more than \$500,000 in funding under the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act.

The approved projects cover various species of fish, their reproduction, distribution, movement, diet and habitat use within the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Some of the projects include examining the population dynamics and biology of the siscowet strain of lake trout in Lake Superior; helping biologists develop genetic management guidelines for lake sturgeon; assessing the status of aquatic habitat in the Lake Huron-Lake St. Clair-Lake Erie corridor; and testing a potential new method for treating ballast water to prevent the transport of invasive aquatic species.

Project proposals are developed and sponsored by tribes and states in the Great Lakes region. The Council of Lake Committees, a 21-member body representing state, Tribal and Canadian Provincial agencies, recommends proposals for funding to the Service Director.

The Service contributes up to 75 percent of the cost of the projects, with matching funds this year coming from Michigan State University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Michigan DNR, the Wisconsin DNR, Ohio State University, New York Department of Environmental Conservation, the University of Maryland and the Ohio DNR.

*Rachel Levin, Public Affairs,
Ft. Snelling, Minnesota*

Louisiana Partners Use Innovative Conservation Tool, Saving Habitat

In late September, the Service, Entergy Corporation, and the Trust for Public Land announced the addition of 2,208 acres to Tensas River NWR in Tallulah, Louisiana as part of a unique partnership to conserve and reforest lands in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. The partnership is the latest effort to combine the science of sequestering carbon from the atmosphere with land conservation, and is expected to play a key role in protecting the threatened floodplain of the Lower Mississippi River.

Through the partnership, the Service will purchase the first 2,208 acres of land from the Trust for Public Land, which purchased the property from Chicago Mill and Lumber Company in February 2004. Entergy has invested over \$1 million to partially fund the purchase of this tract of land, to reforest the property with native bottomland hardwood trees and to compensate the Service for maintaining the new forest for the next 70 years. Entergy retains the right to report carbon sequestration credits that will result from their reforestation efforts.

The land conservation is the first phase of a multi-year, \$15.7 million initiative to protect the entire Chicago Mill property. Once complete, the project will add approximately 11,000 acres to the Tensas River NWR and reforest more than 8,600 of those acres.

“Building innovative partnerships with local communities, businesses, and private landowners is one of the most effective ways we can conserve and restore vital habitat such as Louisiana’s bottomland hardwood forests,” said Deputy Secretary of the Interior J. Steven Giles. “Carbon sequestration partnerships allow us to acquire additional lands for the National Wildlife Refuge System and protect the species and habitats of the Lower Mississippi River Valley.”

Carbon dioxide is a principal greenhouse gas. Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have increased over the past 60 years, leading scientists and policy experts to find ways to control and stabilize carbon dioxide levels to avoid potential adverse impacts from climate change. Emissions can be controlled through improved technologies at their sources, as well as through the use of low-carbon fuels, and carbon sequestration.

Carbon sequestration is the long-term storage of carbon in the terrestrial biosphere, underground, or the oceans. Scientists have found that one acre of reforested bottomland hardwood forest of the Lower Mississippi River floodplain can take up 400 tons of carbon over 70 years. Entergy's reforestation of the Tensas project will result in 600,000 tons of sequestered carbon dioxide over the next 70 years. This equates to removing 200 cars off the road for one year, or avoiding emissions from 61 million gallons of gasoline.

This innovative approach has made it possible for conservationists and utility companies to partner over the last five years to acquire and then reforest agricultural lands. Since 1999, thanks to Entergy and other utility companies, more than 65,000 acres have been reforested in the Lower Mississippi River Valley, and more than 20,000 acres have been added to the National Wildlife Refuge System. More than \$500,000 has also been donated to the National Wildlife Refuge System to maintain these reforested lands.

"As a conservation tool, carbon sequestration gives us the opportunity to address critical issues relating to the atmosphere while at the same time saving and restoring wildlife habitat. Additionally, the public/private partnership accomplishes this at a savings to the American taxpayer," said Don Morrow, Trust for Public Land's project manager. "Entergy is very proud of the public/private partnership we have formed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Trust for Public Land in working to expand and enhance the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in northeast Louisiana. This project not only fits in perfectly with Entergy's Greenhouse Gas Stabilization Commitment, but also helps restore a critical habitat for the threatened Louisiana black bear, as well as making improvements to land that is highly valued by the communities we serve," said Mark Savoff, Entergy's Executive Vice President of Operations.

To date, funding for this project has come from a number of different sources, including the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, and the Entergy Corporation. Project proponents will continue to raise needed funds from federal and private sources to complete the acquisition.

The strong support of the Louisiana Congressional delegation has been instrumental in the funding effort. U.S. Senators John Breaux and Mary Landrieu, and U.S. Representative Rodney Alexander support this project.

The lands added to Tensas River NWR are ecologically significant because they will connect two sections of the refuge to provide an important wildlife corridor for the threatened Louisiana black bear, rare forest breeding birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife.

The Lower Mississippi River floodplain forest is one of the country's most threatened ecosystems. Encompassing portions of Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, the floodplain has lost more than 17 million acres of forestland since the early 1900s due primarily to timber harvest and conversion to agriculture. Tensas River NWR was established in 1980 and encompasses 67,000 acres in northeast Louisiana along the upper Tensas River basin. The refuge protects one of the largest continuous blocks of bottomland hardwood forest left in the Lower Mississippi River Valley.

*Cindy Hoffman, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Suzanne Cousineau, Entergy Corporation

Tim Ahern, Trust for Public Land

The Course of Creeks

We are what we cross paths with, what takes hold of us. These happenstance events create our core and the essence of our being. A little stream took a hold on me and became a meandering baseline, an anchor point from where I would take all bearings for things to come. Creek chub, smallmouth bass, and green sunfish: they caught me. And it was angling for them that brought me to take in the essence of land; it was angling that immersed me in a narrative with the stream and lands that drained into it.

Four Mile Creek heads among the uplands near the Ohio-Indiana line in hills left behind by retreating glaciers. Springs well up into the clear light of day into tiny rivulets formed in the folds of the land, mostly cleared for corn and beans. One rivulet begets two and so on, forming Four Mile; the creek gathers more waters as it glides downhill cutting over ancient glacial till carried far from the north.

In these quiet waters, damselflies dimple their metallic-blue tails on the smooth glides as their eggs drop into the creek. They waft erratically on the wing as if they have no purpose nor care. Save for coming into the maw of a kingbird, they probably don't. Four Mile's erosive forces elbow into the foot of a hill, undercutting the banks that stay stitched together by sycamore roots. The shade of the undercut, the tree roots, the shards of turquoise—little green sunfish, they lie there waiting for the groceries to come to them. It's a good strategy for making a living in a creek. Find a place to hide from herons and kingfishers, stay in shade so unsuspecting minnows can't see you, and sit there and wait for food to come drifting.

The strategy must work. Green sunfish live naturally all over the Midwest. And that speaks to their durability of extremes, not to mention their capacity to procreate. Their fecund nature lends to their reputation as being a child's fish. They look to me like a mix between smallmouth bass, bluegill, and rock bass—like an animal confused, not knowing which evolutionary trajectory to take. A big gape allows the green sunfish to eat most anything that it wants; bats and shrews have shown up in their gullet, but bugs are the favored fare.

Among Midwestern upland streams, the smallmouth bass is king, and the green sunfish is only a mere commoner. But literature professor, Marcus Selden Goldman, who 90 years ago fished Four Mile while at Miami University, strikes a chord in his book *In Praise of Little Fishes*: "The crowd in its ignorance deems it manly and impressive to catch crappies and bluegill, but scorns anything called 'sunfish.' The result of this attitude is that only seasoned and thoughtful anglers know or care to know how to identify the different species of sunfishes."

I don't disagree, but I know of no one that would plan a fishing vacation around green sunfish. And I have to admit, I probably wouldn't either. But I would like to see Four Mile again. It's a yen in part for yesterday; a yearning to reacquaint myself with that baseline, the habitat where I came of age. Neil Young said it perfectly in song: "In my mind I still need a place to go. All my changes were there."

Too many summers have slipped downstream. But still in my mind's eye a diving beetle lumbers to the surface for air, a blue damselfly on a water willow lightly and gracefully moves its wings. The sodden smell of sticky mud fills my head. I can feel in my forearm the sudden tear of a smallmouth bass taking off with a spinner. And I wouldn't mind the light plodding of one of those little cyan sunfish with a mouth big enough to take whatever it can.

A creek is more than a place for bass and bream, warblers and wood ducks. It's habitat for people. Habitat conservation benefits people. Creeks course through people. A tall, fat gray-green sycamore on a shady undercut bend grows naked with age. Slow-moving dark water spattered with yellow sunlight pours over fossil-littered limestone slabs. In the shelter of a pool in a tangle of roots, little fish wait there, the wild consequences of time preserved in living turquoise shards.

Craig Springer, Division of Fisheries, Albuquerque, New Mexico

FWS Retirees Group Now Official

The heretofore loosely formed group of Fish and Wildlife Service Retirees is now an official tax-exempt, non-profit Association with a permanent address at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC). The necessary business charter was approved by West Virginia and the application to the IRS met statute requirement of 501(c)3. The official name of the organization is The Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees, also to be known as the FWS Retirees Association. Annual retiree reunions have been ongoing for the past 6 years beginning when 13 former colleagues gathered at the NCTC in 1999. Attendance has since grown to 200 retirees attending annual reunion events.

General retiree membership is available to any person employed by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service who has retired. Upon furnishing a mailing address to the Association, retirees will receive mailings of publications and other limited information of interest about retiree activities and events, and current Service activities and accomplishments. Immediate family members of deceased retirees also meet the membership definition. As of October 2004, the general Association membership is approaching 2000 mailing addresses. Of this total, over 850 members also have e-mail capability.

Fish & Wildlife... In Brief

During the 2004 Retirees Reunion at Shepherdstown, West Virginia, an interim nine member Board of Directors was agreed on and interim officers elected. Jerry Grover will fill the Interim Board Chairman's office with Denny Holland named as the Secretary/ Treasurer and Jerry French as the Vice Chairman. The other interim Board members and alternates are Tom Duncan, Don Fortenbery, John Green, Tom McAndrews, Dorte Norton, Wendall Ogden, Judy Pulliam, Jo Quinter, John Ramsour, and Joe Yovino. The immediate task of the Board is to develop a set of Bylaws that will guide Association business to be made available for review and approval by the Association's general membership and to identify a slate of candidates to run for election as permanent Board members. The plan is complete the election process and to have a permanent Board of Directors elected for installation by the next retirees reunion in September 2005 in Portland, Oregon.

*Jerry C. Grover, Interim Chairman,
FWS Retirees Association*

Jerry is a retired Portland Regional Office Fisheries/ Ecological Services deputy living in Portland, Oregon, and a former Chief of the NFH System, who is gathering and maintaining the e-mail address list, is the Region 1 retirees representative and a Heritage Committee member, and has been serving as an unofficial 'scribe.' He just recently was elected as the Interim Chairman of the FWS Retirees Association.

Service Spins a Good Web

Fishing Online: 1,000 Best Web Sites, published by Stoeger Books of Accokeek, Maryland and written by Craig Buddo, lists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service web site as one of the best. Buddo notes that the Service "has a huge web site for describing its role as manager of the nation's wildlife resources," and points to the online availability of the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation as one of its several sterling features. In addition, the Service web site gets a "Top Rated" click from author Buddo.

Retirees Schedule 2005 Reunion in Portland

The Association of Fish & Wildlife Service Retirees has now scheduled their next reunion in Portland, Oregon. The DoubleTree Hotel-Columbia River has been secured as the headquarters hotel for the September 14-18, 2005, events. It is located where the I-5 bridge crosses the Columbia River into Washington. A very special room rate of \$87 per night, including breakfasts for two, will be available for 2 days prior and 2 days after the scheduled events to allow for an extended stay to tour Northwest sites. Planned events include an icebreaker social on a deck overlooking the Columbia River; workshops important to retirees, visits to Service facilities at Spring Creek NFH and Ridgefield NWR, and a Saturday night banquet. Reservations must be made by August 22, 2005, by calling 1-800-643-7611 to assure the special FWS reunion rate.

All early indications suggest that a large turnout from across the country can be expected. As has been the custom in the past, current Service employees are invited and encouraged to attend. For questions and further information, Jerry Grover will be the FWS 2005 Retiree Reunion Coordinator. He may be contacted at 503/684 1809 or <Groverjerry.judy@att.net> by e-mail.

Fish & Wildlife Honors

Atlantic Flyway Pilots/Biologists Take Coordination to a Higher Elevation!

Flyway Pilots/Biologists **Carl Ferguson, Karen Bollinger** and **Jim Wortham**, Division of Migratory Bird Management, Waterfowl Population Surveys Section, Laurel, Maryland, were presented with Certificates of Appreciation from the Roanoke-Tar-Neuse-Cape Fear Team and Region 4. In 1996, the Ecosystem's Biologist group and the North Carolina Migratory Bird office collaborated to coordinate the collection of aerial waterfowl survey data. The objectives of this coordinated effort were to begin a process of standardizing aerial waterfowl data collection for nine northeastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia refuges and to better understand the wintering distribution of waterfowl and timing of large movements made by waterfowl. These data were stored in a centralized, website database for public viewing and use by resource managers to define and evaluate habitat management actions. The Atlantic Flyway Pilots/Biologists agreed to assist in this undertaking. Since 1996, well over 400 individual refuge aerial waterfowl surveys have been completed and over 600 hours logged on surveys alone. The complexity of scheduling flights around acceptable weather conditions fell primarily on the Flyway Pilot/Biologist. The timely and safe completion of these surveys was made possible largely because of the high degree of professionalism and dedication provided by the Flyway Pilots/Biologists. As a result of this effort, a centralized website database with eight years of data exists that has provided us with a better understanding the wintering distribution of waterfowl and improved our ability to better define and evaluate habitat management actions.

*Bob Noffsinger, Migratory Bird Biologist,
Division of Migratory Birds, Manteo Field
Office, Manteo, North Carolina*

*John Stanton, Private Lands Biologist,
Division of Migratory Birds, Manteo Field
Office, Manteo, North Carolina*

Continued on page 18

Honors (continued)

Southwest Fire Manager Wins New National Leadership Award

Curtis Heaton from Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge was nationally recognized for his dedication and commitment to developing future leaders in interagency wildland fire management. As a recipient of the new "Paul Gleason Lead by Example Award," Heaton is among a group of six national winners from the BLM, BIA, USFS and the Ventura County Fire Department.

The selection of Heaton as a winner in the Initiative and Innovation category was based on his leadership in providing learning and development opportunities to future leaders. His achievements include promotion of leadership values, fostering of the "After-Action Review" concept, assistance with developing leadership curriculum and creating two Leadership Toolbox references located on the Wildland Fire Leadership website <www.fireleadership.gov>.

Heaton is the Service's Regional Wildland Urban Interface Coordinator for Region 2 and is stationed in Sasabe, Arizona. Previous to joining Fish and Wildlife, he was superintendent of the Prescott Interagency Hotshot Crew.

The award was established this year by the interagency National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Leadership Committee to recognize outstanding achievement and accomplishment through leadership in fire management. Categories honored include Mentoring and Teamwork; Motivation and Vision; and Initiative and Innovation. The award, which will be given annually, was named for Paul Gleason, a well-known leader in the interagency wildland fire community who promoted the "student of fire" concept.

*John Wood, Prescribed Fire Specialist,
Klamath Basin National Wildlife
Refuge Complex*

Transitions... Who's Coming and Going

In keeping with his emphasis on strengthening the Service's science programs, the Director announced that **Gary Frazer**, who served as Assistant Director, Endangered Species from 1998–2004, has accepted a reassignment to serve as the Service's liaison to the USGS. In this position, Gary will work closely with the Director, USGS Director Chip Groat, and science advisor Dan Ashe.

Alexandra Pitts, formerly Chief of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (CLA) in Washington, DC, has moved to Sacramento to assume External Affairs duties for CNO. **Christine Eustis** has been selected as the new Chief of CLA. Christine was previously the Assistant Regional Director, External Affairs in Region 4 and formerly served as a staff legislative specialist in CLA.

Richard Hannan has been selected as Region 7's new Assistant Regional Director for Budget and Administration. Prior to joining the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1992, Richard was the Director of the Kentucky State Nature Reserve Commission. He started his career with the Service in Region 4, then moved to Washington, DC, where he served as the Deputy Chief of the Division of Endangered Species. He then transferred to Region 7 in 1999, as the Program Supervisor for the Fisheries and Ecological Services.

Marge Kolar has been approved to become the Assistant Manager for the Refuge Program at CNO. Marge has nearly 29 years with the Fish and Wildlife Service, serving in a variety of programs, geographic areas and organizational levels. For the past ten years Marge has been the Refuge Manager for the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR.

Former Chief, Branch of Communications; Division of Visitor Services and Communications in the National Wildlife Refuge System, **Dick Cole** has taken a position as a senior communications strategist and advisor to the Secretary of the Army.

Jim Gale, a 12-year veteran of the Service, is the new Special Agent in Charge of Law Enforcement in the Service's Southeast Region. Formerly the Special Agent in Charge of the Service's Division of Law Enforcement Operations in Washington, DC, Gale now oversees Service Law Enforcement staff and activities in the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta and at 36 stations throughout the Southeast.

Wendi Weber is the new Assistant Regional Director of Ecological Services for the Service's Midwest Region. Weber succeeds Charlie Wooley, who became the Service's Midwest Deputy Regional Director in January 2004. Weber's responsibilities will include directing the Ecological Services program, including oversight of staff in 10 ecological services field offices and the regional office.

Pete Benjamin, a 13-year veteran of the Service, is the new Field Supervisor of the Service's Ecological Services Field Office in Raleigh, North Carolina. He was formerly Assistant Field Supervisor of the Jacksonville, Florida Ecological Services office. In his new position, Benjamin directs a staff of 17 people and oversees Ecological Services activities.

John F. Organ, Ph.D., wildlife program chief for the Division of Federal Assistance in the Northeast Region since 1993, has been elected Vice President of The Wildlife Society. He will serve for one year as vice president, another as president-elect, and will be installed as president in Sept. 2006 at the Society's annual conference in Anchorage, Alaska. John has worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 25 years, and has served as the Society's northeast section representative since 1999.

Michael Thabault has been selected to be the Northeast Region's new Assistant Regional Director for Ecological Services. Thabault comes with more than 17 years of experience in fish and wildlife conservation. In his current position as a biologist in the Office of Consultation, HCPs and Recovery in the Washington Office of Endangered Species, Thabault is responsible for coordinating review of water projects under the Endangered Species Act.

In Memoriam



John Paul Taylor, 2004 Refuge Employee of the Year is remembered as an outstanding scientist.

John Paul Taylor Jr., biologist at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge Association's current "Employee of the Year," died September 27 after a massive stroke at the age of 49.

Taylor had received the National Wildlife Refuge Association's "Employee of the Year" award in March 2004. The award is presented each year to one "individual whose career has shown a commitment to the conservation of our natural resources, innovation and effectiveness in dealing with outside organizations and the public." Over the course of his career with the Service, he was recognized at many levels for his expertise in research and its application for restoring riverine habitat.

A long-term Service employee, Taylor had been at Bosque del Apache NWR since 1985. He was one of the first Senior Wildlife Biologists with the Service and was the principal investigator for the Land Management and Research Demonstration program. The demonstration program is a prestigious designation as Bosque del Apache was one of only 13 National Wildlife Refuges chosen in the refuge system. He also worked at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and on the island of Culebra in Puerto Rico.

"In my more than 30 years of experience in several states, I cannot think of anyone more effective than John Taylor in advancing the cause of wildlife conservation and the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System," stated Refuge Manager Jim Savery.

Taylor was an expert on sandhill crane and waterfowl management and was often asked to share his knowledge with conservation organizations, land management agencies and professional colleagues. He was an active researcher and wrote numerous articles on habitat restoration work. He was a great mentor to young employees and often recruited universities and students to use the refuge for research projects that could be applied to on-the-ground management at Bosque del Apache NWR and elsewhere.

He was an advocate for salt cedar control and riparian restoration and worked for years to improve techniques and practices to reduce the impact of this invasive species in southwestern wetlands. Innovation was one of the tools he used in developing technical skills to handle salt cedar removal and conversion of salt cedar monocultures to native vegetation, wetlands and croplands. Taylor wrote numerous articles on his habitat restoration work. "Riparian Management on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge," by J.P. Taylor and K.C. McDaniel, published in the New Mexico Journal of Science, in November 1998 and "Soil Disturbance, Flood Management and Riparian Woody Plant Establishment on the Rio Grande Floodplain," published in Wetlands in 1999 are just two of his published papers.

Taylor has been described as "amazingly effective at working with outside organizations and the public." He coordinated with New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge and other agencies to manage waterfowl populations along the Middle Rio Grande Valley. The cooperation was highly effective in managing approximately 45,000 snow geese, 23,000 sandhill cranes and more than 60,000 ducks each winter.

Even in death, Taylor was able to give the gift of life. His organs were donated to a young, energetic colleague and friend with whom he worked locally on saltcedar and various water projects for many years. The transplant recipient had been on a waiting list for kidneys for almost two years. In a wonderful turn of events, the recipient proved to be an appropriate match and Taylor's family requested a directed transplant donation.

He is survived by his wife Maggie and his two children Juan Pablo, a student at New Mexico State University, and Maria Elena, a Rotary Exchange Student in Argentina and many friends and colleagues. He held a Bachelors degree from New Mexico State University in Agriculture and a Master of Science Degree in Wildlife Science from Texas Tech. At the time of his death, he was pursuing a PhD in Range Management at New Mexico State.

A memorial service was held at the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge on October 3. The Refuge's Friends group has established a memorial fund to benefit wildlife. Send donations to: Friends of the Bosque, PO Box 340, San Antonio, NM 87832.

Taylor will be remembered as a talented, brilliant man who encouraged and helped all those with whom he worked. Memories and photos have been posted on a web site at bhg.fws.gov/JPTindex.htm.

*Elizabeth Slown, Public Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Legacy of Conservation and Inspiration: The Duck Stamp

The cover of this issue of *Fish & Wildlife News* depicts Mark Anderson's lovely vision of hooded mergansers, which will grace the 2005 Duck Stamp that opens for sale in July. Since the program's inception, Duck Stamp sales have raised more than \$670 million to conserve more than 5.2 million acres of crucial habitat throughout the United States and its territories. Funds raised through duck stamp sales have protected important habitat on hundreds of refuges in nearly every State. The Duck Stamp's unparalleled success has also given life to imitators—scores of State and international conservation stamp programs that in turn have contributed millions more dollars for conservation across the globe.

In the past two years, Duck Stamp funds have been used to purchase migratory bird habitat at refuges in dozens of states across the nation. To name just a few, funding was used to acquire 1,344 acres of habitat for migrating and wintering waterfowl at San Bernard NWR, and 2,285 acres of wetland habitat at Trinity River NWR. In Idaho, funds were used to purchase 760 acres of wetlands at Grays Lake NWR, while 320 acres of wetlands were purchased and added to Red River NWR in Louisiana.

America's waterfowl were in deep trouble in the early 1930s, after years of agricultural development led to the wholesale drainage of millions of acres of wetlands. The farmland created by wetlands destruction

was often marginal. But the loss of this crucial nesting, breeding and wintering habitat, combined with the aftereffects of years of unrestricted market hunting and a lingering drought, had devastated waterfowl populations across the continent.

Fearing that many waterfowl species were on the brink of extinction, a group of dedicated conservationists, led by Jay N. "Ding" Darling, an avid duck hunter and nationally famous editorial cartoonist, began looking at ways to provide money for habitat protection and restoration. The National Wildlife Refuge System, created in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt, had been limping along for years with inadequate funding. Darling was appointed in early 1934 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to head the U.S. Biological Survey, the forerunner of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Within a matter of months, Darling convinced Roosevelt to tap WPA rehabilitation funds, drought relief funds and other sources to amass \$8.5 million for emergency purchases of wetlands. (As we have been reminded by the recent spate of hurricanes, there is often a great unanticipated need to protect our natural resources.) But he and others recognized that a steady stream of revenue was needed to begin to reverse the decline in waterfowl populations. With their help, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp

Act on March 16, 1934, requiring all hunters 16 years of age and older to possess a valid Duck Stamp.

As the United States becomes more urbanized, Duck Stamp sales to non-hunters will be crucial to ensure that funding levels remain adequate to protect available tracts of wetlands. Indeed, land acquired using Duck Stamp funds supports more than just waterfowl and waterfowl hunting. Hundreds of other migratory bird species, as well as threatened and endangered species, have found a home on the habitat Duck Stamp dollars have protected. Many of these lands are also open for wildlife watching, photography and other outdoor recreation activities.

That is why I encourage all Service employees to participate in the Duck Stamp Challenge.

Steve Williams



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