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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

January/February 2000

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A Message from the Director

I believe that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is vital to the future of fish and wildlife resources. I think most of you believe this as well. We are the *only* federal agency whose *primary mission* is conserving fish, wildlife and plants.

Think about this for a minute. Because while other agencies work with us, and contribute greatly to conservation and environmental protection, all of them also have other missions—and many times, those missions may diverge from fish and wildlife conservation.

...we need to take a minute to reflect on, and acknowledge, the great strengths of the Fish & Wildlife Service.

Why am I writing about this? Because I think perhaps we need to take a minute to reflect on, and acknowledge, the great strengths of the Fish & Wildlife Service.

Late in 1999, various groups or individuals advanced proposals that would break off parts of the Service, taking core functions and making them into separate agencies or moving them to agencies in other cabinet departments. One of the proposals, which came up briefly this fall, would have moved Federal Aid to some other department, perhaps combining it with other state grant programs. A more serious and public proposal—to form a separate bureau for the National Wildlife Refuge System—was supported by no less distinguished an organization than the National Audubon Society as well as some of our own current and retired employees. About the same time, the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility released results of their own survey of refuge managers which reported continuing concern by refuge managers over resources and leadership for the refuge system.



Photo: FWS.

I have worked hard during my tenure to support the refuge system, and I want employees to know that I am truly listening to the concerns and needs of our managers in the field. At the same time, I cannot help but think back to the last time something like this happened—and it wasn't that long ago. Most of you remember when the Service had a research function. Some of our employees thought research should stand on its own, as a renewed National Biological Survey. The idea had significant merit—indeed, enough merit to gain the Secretary's support. Unfortunately, as we learned, the trend in government (particularly in Congress) does not smile upon small, independent agencies. Like NBS, now a division of the U.S. Geological Survey, they tend to be reorganized or subsumed

into larger, existing agencies with related functions. Another example from right here in the Interior Department: the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which briefly became the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service before being merged with the National Park Service.

Many long-time Washington-watchers are skeptical that an independent National Wildlife Refuge Service would survive long in a political climate that favors consolidation of services. Many have grave concerns, as well, about what would become of the remaining functions of the Fish & Wildlife Service. Such concerns are fueled by the knowledge that political winds can shift unexpectedly and that challenges to the survival of land managing agencies continue. For example, just this month, the Cato Institute issued a "blueprint for auctioning off all public lands over 20 to 40 years."

In December, I met with a number of Service employees and with representatives from the conservation community to discuss the National Wildlife Refuge System. I listened closely to what they had to say and I committed to take those issues to the Service directorate. That same month, I also received the report of the federal/state task force which has been reviewing our Federal Aid program and met with many constituent groups to hear their concerns about the management and future direction of the Federal Aid program.

Deputies Team Begins Review

In late January, the "deputies team" of deputy regional and assistant directors began its review of the current regional office organization. The review's purpose is to determine whether implementation of this structure accomplishes the original objectives to "unite all Service programs to lead or support ecosystem level conservation" and "strengthen both the ecosystem philosophy and program integrity and consistency."

Two separate review teams will conduct concurrent visits to regional and Washington offices during February. The team visits will include multiple focus groups with GARDs,

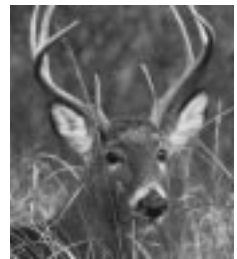
PARDs, program supervisors, regional office division chiefs, ecosystem team leaders and, in addition, randomly selected groups of regional office staff, project leaders, and non-project leader field staff. The deputies have engaged both the Federal Aid Management Assistance Team and NCTC staff to assist. The National Ecosystem Approach Implementation Team also participated in development of the evaluation process.

The deputies will brief the Directorate on their findings in late March and will prepare a final report with recommendations for consideration at the Directorate meeting in April.

At the January directorate meeting, I kept my commitment to raise these issues for discussion. The directorate decided to initiate a review of the current regional office organization to evaluate whether implementation of this structure meets the intended goals of the original decision. This decision follows up on the commitment we made nearly 2 years ago, when the current organization was established, to monitor its implementation. The review will be conducted by the deputies team of deputy regional and deputy assistant directors, with input from the Ecosystem Implementation Team. Our goal is for the team to complete its review, including a report with findings and recommendations, to allow discussion and decision at the directorate meeting in April. With regard to Federal Aid, we are continuing to work closely with the states and constituent organizations to forge a solution that will resolve problems while maintaining a strong Federal Aid program.

The refuge proposal and the recent controversy over the Federal Aid program both raise issues which deserve serious consideration and thoughtful action. Unfortunately, the refuge proposal in particular has been phrased in a way that tends to foster divisiveness with other segments of our organization. I hear many refuge employees worrying about the future of the refuge system, but I also hear refuge employees and employees in other parts of the Service voicing a rising concern about the divisiveness of this discussion and its effect on the very future of our agency. To a lesser extent, the Federal Aid situation has raised issues about how Federal Aid “fits” into the rest of the Service.

The Fish & Wildlife Service has always been composed of a variety of parts, from the days when the Bureau of Fisheries was combined with the Bureau of Biological Survey. All of us know this and many of us have strong loyalty to our core organizations—our divisions, our programs, our regions. The diversity of our organization is one of our strengths. We learn from each other. We work together and support each other. When a field station does not have the needed expertise, it can call on another Service office that does have it.



Photos: FWS.

National wildlife refuges are unique and wonderful places—but they are not islands. Many refuges benefit from the support and assistance of fisheries and ecological services offices, as well as from the expertise of migratory bird specialists or the support of Service specialists in other disciplines. As just one example: it was Ecological Services field stations that conducted much of the work to support the Service in its effort to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil development.

Our Federal Aid program is integral to our effectiveness as well. It is a keystone of our relationship with states, with hunters and anglers, and with the organizations that represent them. A strong Federal Aid program is essential to the Service's mission.

The Service is not unlike the United States of America—a whole made of disparate parts. Our forefathers faced the daunting task of creating a union from the individual colonies—and they had to fight to maintain that union. Perhaps we are no different. Perhaps we have not yet found the magic formula—the right organization, the right administrative system—which somehow keeps all our different parts working together in perpetual harmony and balance. Or perhaps there is no one “right” answer and we must count some friction as the cost of maintaining the diversity, energy, and creativity that is our Service family.

Certainly, we always have to keep working to make things better. As we do, I hope we will remember one thing: we are strongest when we all stand together. Together, we can be an effective, insistent, unmistakable voice for conservation. Apart, we are weaker at best, with new bureaucratic separations placed between core conservation functions, constituents and partners. At worst, we are fodder for reorganization into some other agency or department where our mission may be watered down, our visibility lessened, our effectiveness diminished.

So let us take a moment to reflect upon what's “right” with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—an agency unique in our nation and perhaps in the world; an agency that Congress has entrusted to carry out conservation laws that actually have teeth; an agency where dedicated employees from many disciplines can work together and assist each other.

And if you need inspiration for the continuing struggle to balance competing priorities, overcome differences and find strength in diversity, just dig in your pocket for a penny and look at the motto of our forefathers: *e pluribus unum*—out of many, one.

James R. Clark

Service Nets First U.S. Caviar Smuggling Convictions

Guilty verdicts handed down against two caviar importers whose smuggling activities were exposed by the Service's Division of Law Enforcement marked the nation's first successful criminal prosecution upholding global protections for sturgeon—fish whose survival in the wild is increasingly at risk.

On November 3, 1999, after a jury trial in Brooklyn, New York, Eugeniusz Koczuk, the owner of an import company in Stamford, Connecticut, was found guilty of conspiracy, smuggling, and violating the Lacey Act—a federal statute that makes it a crime to import wildlife or wildlife products taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any U.S. law or treaty.

A business associate was convicted of one felony Lacey Act violation and a third individual, a Polish national who was Warsaw's deputy police chief at the time of his arrest, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to smuggle wildlife.

The case, which was investigated by Region 5 Special Agent Ed Grace with assistance from the U.S. Customs Service, exposed a smuggling operation that illegally brought thousands of pounds of caviar into the United States.

"As one of the world's largest consumers of caviar, the United States has a special obligation to enforce global trade controls protecting wild sturgeon," said Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "This case and the jury's verdict demonstrate our commitment to shutting down the black market for caviar in this country and ensuring the survival of sturgeon species around the world."

Sturgeon, a family of fish that predate the dinosaurs, have long been harvested for their roe, which is processed and sold as caviar. Habitat degradation and overfishing have combined to imperil these fish, especially the Caspian Sea species that are the source of the world's most highly prized caviar. Wild populations there have declined dramatically since the 1970s.



Illegal entry. One of 16 suitcases packed with caviar seized from couriers on a flight from Poland. This interdiction led to the nation's first felony convictions for violating global protections for sturgeon. FWS photo.

The global plight of these fish prompted the member nations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) to introduce new controls on commercial trade in all sturgeon species and their products, including caviar. Since April 1, 1998, the United States and its global CITES partners have required that caviar imports be accompanied by CITES permits from the exporting nation. When countries issue these permits, they guarantee that the caviar contained in the shipment was legally acquired and that trade represents no threat to the continued survival of wild sturgeon.

Service wildlife inspectors stationed at major ports of entry check incoming caviar shipments for CITES permits. Caviar importations must be declared as wildlife products to the Service and made available for inspection.

Koczuk and his co-defendant both attended a Service-sponsored public meeting that was held in New York in January 1998 to explain the new trade controls before they went into effect. Koczuk, however, ignored these requirements, paying off-duty airline employees to smuggle suitcases packed with tins of caviar into the United States via John F. Kennedy International Airport.

On October 28, 1998, federal investigators acting on a tip met a flight from Poland and apprehended seven couriers whose 16 suitcases contained 1,000 pounds of caviar. Another 1,000 pounds were later seized at Koczuk's Connecticut home.

Sandy Cleva, Office of Law Enforcement, Arlington, Virginia

On the Cover:

Bridge to peace. From left to right: Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, U.S. President Bill Clinton and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa take a walk together on the grounds of the National Conservation Training Center during the Middle East peace talks held at NCTC in January. Rick Lemon, director of NCTC, said of this occasion: "NCTC was designed to bring people together to learn, share perspectives and solve problems. We were honored that the President chose the Service's 'home' to host these important efforts to bridge decades of differences and forge a peace between the two nations. The President's comment to me about NCTC was, 'What a beautiful facility!'" White House photo.

Service Will Prepare Cormorant Management Plan

Responding to increasing concerns about the possible effect of double-crested cormorant populations on recreational fishing, habitat and other migratory birds, the Service announced in November that it will develop a comprehensive national cormorant management plan.

The Service published a notice in the November 8 Federal Register of its intent to write an environmental impact statement evaluating the species' status, known and perceived impacts on other resources, and potential management strategies. The plan will also consider the administrative, logistic, and socio-economic impacts of various management strategies.

"The Service's responsibility is to maintain healthy cormorant populations across the nation. Our goal is to determine what effects current and projected cormorant populations may be having on commercial and recreational fisheries, and to use the best science available to direct future management," said Director Jamie Rappaport Clark.

The Service will evaluate management alternatives in the environmental impact statement, based on comments received during a public scoping process that began with publication of a Notice of Intent. As part of this process, the Service will host public meetings at sites across the country to gather public input on potential options.

Potential management alternatives range from continuing present policies to implementing large-scale population control measures on breeding grounds, wintering grounds, and migration areas in the United States.

Populations of double-crested cormorants declined dramatically during the 1950s and 1960s from the effects of human persecution, the pesticide DDT and the overall declining health of many ecosystems, especially that of the Great Lakes. Today, the population is at historic highs, due in large part to the presence of ample food in their summer and winter ranges, federal and state protection, and reduced contaminant levels.



Concern. *The Service will evaluate the status of cormorants, which can be destructive to fishery resources. SCS photo: Tom McCabe.*

The population resurgence of double-crested cormorants has led to increasing concern about the birds' impact on commercial and recreational fishery resources. Cormorants and other waterbirds such as pelicans and herons can have adverse impacts on fish populations at fish farms, hatcheries, and sites where hatchery-reared fish are released—situations in which fish are concentrated in artificially high densities.

Because cormorants are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, their nests and eggs cannot be disturbed, and birds cannot be captured or killed unless a depredation permit is obtained from the Service.

*Chris Tollefson, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Law Enforcement Repatriates War Bonnet to Sioux

The Division of Law Enforcement repatriated a historic Native American headdress at a tribal council meeting in November at the Standing Rock Tribal Council headquarters at Fort Yates, North Dakota.

The young chief's war bonnet, made of golden eagle feathers and dated to the mid-1920s, was presented to Tribal Chairman Charles W. Murphy by Region 6 Assistant Regional Director for Law Enforcement Chester T. Hamilton.

Although golden eagles have been protected since 1962 by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, eagle feathers and products acquired before the act may be possessed, as long as they are not bought or sold. The Service repatriates wildlife artifacts of religious and cultural significance as part of its trust responsibility to Native American tribes, which also includes providing assistance with wildlife management and law enforcement.

"We are very honored and grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to return an object that is central to our culture and will be cared for by our tribe in a respectful manner," wrote Chairman Murphy in a recent letter to the Service.

The war bonnet, intricately decorated with beadwork, ribbon and 33 feathers from three golden eagles, was confiscated from an illegal dealer by a Service special agent during an undercover operation in Bozeman, Montana. In a coordinated effort with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks game wardens and criminal investigators, the agent posed as an interested buyer responding to a tip about a man wanting to sell an eagle feather headdress. The agent met with the seller and bought the headdress for \$5,800.

The dealer was apprehended and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Missoula, Montana. He pled guilty to a misdemeanor count of violating the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and was sentenced in September 1998 to 2 years probation and ordered to pay a \$7,500 fine.

Law Enforcement Repatriates War Bonnet to Sioux (continued)

During the investigation, it was learned that the dealer had acquired the headdress as payment on a debt from a woman who had inherited it from her late father, a Bismarck banker who handled land and cattle transactions for members of the four bands of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe during the 1920's. According to the banker's daughter, he received the headdress as a gift from the tribe, in gratitude for his work.

Once the headdress was no longer needed as evidence in the case, it was scheduled to be sent to the Service's Eagle Repository in Denver, from which feathers are distributed to members of federally recognized tribes for religious purposes. However, Service law enforcement officials felt it should instead be returned to the tribe from which it originated. Regional Director Ralph Morgenweck agreed, and the Service began planning, with tribal officials, to repatriate the headdress.

"The Service has long recognized the importance of eagles to Native Americans and we work closely with the tribes on these and other wildlife enforcement issues," Hamilton said. "Our work to prevent profiteering in eagle items and feathers has restored a sacred headdress to the Standing Rock Sioux and demonstrated our commitment to stop illegal wildlife trafficking."

Karen Miranda Gleason, External Affairs, Denver, Colorado

Ranchers Lend a Hand for the Chickens

If ranches were always named for the birds that populated them, then once upon a time John and Taunia Elick's place in southeast Texas might have been called Attwater's Prairie Chicken Ranch. A grouse species that once thrived on this land, the Attwater's prairie chicken has become North America's most endangered bird. Elick and fellow ranchers in the area have joined an effort to bring the bird back and to restore this lost element of the Gulf Coast prairie ecosystem.

"I want to do something for wildlife," said Elick, whose 1,800-acre spread is named Eagle Roost Ranch for the majestic raptors which use the tall cottonwoods lining the San Bernard River as it bisects the ranch. "I want to help create and maintain habitat for wildlife because I believe that what is good for the ecology of the land is good for me and my ranch."

Elick is one of eight landowners working to restore Texas coastal prairie habitat on a total of more than 17,800 acres as part of the Coastal Prairie Conservation Initiative. Jointly sponsored by Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge, the Sam Houston Resource Conservation and Development Board, and local soil and water conservation districts, the partnership program allows landowners to receive cost-share incentives to carry out prairie habitat conservation practices such as brush control, grazing management, and prescribed burning to improve the health of their range land.

Also, landowners may sign a Safe Harbor agreement essentially releasing them from liability under the Endangered Species Act if management practices attract endangered species. After hearing about the program and Safe Harbor agreements, Elick approached program representatives from the Service and the Resource Conservation and Development Board. He liked what he heard.

"Basically," said Elick, "I learned that the Safe Harbor was designed to protect the ranch owner's property rights on his land, and yet provide the government special use ranchland for endangered species habitat without the price tag of acquiring the land. Both the government and private landowner benefit without any negative drawbacks to either party."



Friend of the environment. John Elick is one of many Texas landowners who voluntarily practice conservation on their property. FWS photo.

Terry Rossignol, manager at Attwater Prairie Chicken refuge, agrees with Elick's assessment.

"It's a win-win situation for everyone involved," he said. "The rancher improves his habitat for his cattle operation and the Attwater's prairie chicken benefits from the improved habitat as well."

If participating landowners carry out the agreed upon cost-shared habitat improvements, they may develop, farm or ranch without fear of being stopped. They are only required to notify the Service and give the agency an opportunity to relocate any endangered species expected to be adversely affected.

"This program has mushroomed in popularity and, because Texas is more than 97 percent privately owned, it now holds the key to successful recovery of the Attwater's prairie chicken," said Rossignol. "Without the help of private landowners, the bird is doomed to extinction."

Recent landowner participation may prove that cattle grazing and endangered species recovery can go hand in hand. Things may start looking brighter for this rare bird thanks to people like John Elick, who represents a growing population of large ranch owners who feel that managing land for wildlife can enhance property value as well as protect endangered species.

Superfund Restoration With a Smile

"It is extremely encouraging to see partnerships like these sprouting up from what once was a soil of distrust and animosity," said Nancy Kaufman, regional director for the Service's Southwest region. "I'm optimistic that these kind of partnerships will have a lot to do with conserving our natural heritage in the coming millennium."

At sunset on his ranch, Elick said, he often sits atop a horse on the forested banks of the San Bernard, letting several of his Longhorn cows take a drink from the river. Quail call to each other in the brush. A bald eagle glides by en route to the branch of a cottonwood tree, its evening roost.

Some might say it doesn't get any better than that, but Elick believes it can. With the help of the Coastal Prairie Conservation Initiative, he hopes to see Mother Nature welcome home the Attwater's prairie chicken—a piece of nature and of the past that has been missing from his ranch for too long.

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

History of the Eagle Roost

Legend holds that divisions of Santa Ana's army crossed the San Bernard River on the Elicks' ranch in 1836 in pursuit of Sam Houston's army. The first owner of the ranch, Henry Freisin, was awarded the ranch by the Republic of Texas for his service in the Battle of San Jacinto, when Santa Ana's army was defeated.

In later years, historically famous cattle barons of the 1880s—Shanghai Pierce and Robert Stafford—gathered cattle ranging over the area during the Chisolm Trail drive days. Local tradition contends that Parker's Hole on the San Bernard river is where horse rustlers were hanged from the cottonwood trees. The ranch is still the original tract patented to Henry Freisin in 1836 and has been continuously ranched ever since.



Homegrown effort. Interpretive signs welcome visitors to these newly restored wetlands in Vermont. FWS photo.

Restoring natural resources injured by toxic wastes from a Superfund site can be complicated, time-consuming and costly. This was not the case, however, at the Bennington Landfill Superfund Site in Bennington, Vermont. Exercising a bit of Yankee ingenuity, Bennington's town officials took a different approach to carrying out their part of a settlement agreement.

The result was an efficient, economical restoration that has been enthusiastically embraced by everyone involved, including the town's citizens and the Service.

"This has been a win-win situation for everyone: wildlife, the Service, town officials and the community," said Mike Bartlett, supervisor of the New England Field Office in Concord, New Hampshire. "The result of the town's efforts, the Bradford-Putnam Wetlands, will serve as an outstanding model for future Superfund restoration efforts."

Located in rural southwestern Vermont, the Bennington Landfill was initially a site for sand and gravel excavation. In June 1969, the landfill began receiving residential, commercial, and industrial wastes, some containing polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. Between 1974 and 1986, sampling by the town of Bennington and state and federal agencies revealed elevated levels of PCBs in groundwater.

In addition, PCBs, volatile organic compounds, and metals had contaminated wetlands adjacent to the landfill. In 1989, the Environmental Protection Agency designated the landfill as a Superfund site.

As part of a Natural Resource Damage Assessment, Service biologists determined that migratory birds inhabiting the wetland and upland communities surrounding the landfill were harmed by contamination. The Service and the state of Vermont worked together to negotiate a natural resource damage settlement with one of the responsible parties, the town of Bennington. To compensate the public for wildlife harmed by the landfill, wetlands would need to be restored.

Superfund Restoration With a Smile

(continued)

The Service and Bennington officials selected an uncontaminated forested wetland area east of the town. The area had once served as part of a water supply system, and the natural flows of the wetlands had been altered. To restore the natural hydrology of the wetland, the town agreed to remove numerous antiquated cisterns.

The town also committed to providing a conservation easement to a local land trust to permanently protect the area. The cost of the restoration work was estimated to be around \$160,000.

This, said Bartlett, is where the story gets interesting.

Rather than hire contractors to do the work, Bennington's town officials decided to tackle the job themselves, using town employees and equipment. In 1998, during the slow winter season, town workers descended upon the wetland restoration site, and with guidance from a citizens' committee and Service biologists, they restored the natural hydrology of the area, and graded the banks of the pools, creating more natural wetland habitat.

But Bennington's citizens decided to go beyond restoration. Taking advantage of the natural beauty of the area, Bennington and the Service created a nature trail with interpretive signs, and local schools are using the area as an outdoor laboratory.

"And, because Bennington's citizens chose to do the work themselves, the cost of the restoration was only \$40,000," Bartlett said.

Now that the work is done, monitoring begins. This summer, biologists noted that wetland habitat is expanding, with new wetland vegetation growing throughout the site; they have also spotted numerous species of songbirds, amphibians and reptiles. The nature trail winds around the wetlands, with five interpretive signs explaining the restoration and habitat. Several bird boxes have been installed.

Linda Morse, New England Field Office, Concord, New Hampshire

Bringing Black Bears Back

The Service listed the Louisiana black bear as threatened in 1992 in the face of declining populations and continued conversion of forested habitat to agricultural uses and highways. Naturally occurring black bear populations now are confined to two primary areas: the Tensas River Basin in northeast Louisiana and the Atchafalaya River Basin in southern Louisiana.

The remaining forest fragments in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley are merely islands in a sea of agriculture, according to George Chandler, manager at Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge. Despite this challenge, the Service is striving to overcome obstacles with a cooperative bear relocation program.

The Service, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Deltic Farm and Timber Corporation, and the Black Bear Conservation Committee of Louisiana have for several years been relocating bears and cubs to suitable habitat which might otherwise be inaccessible to them. Biologists removed female bears and their cubs from their winter dens on Tensas River refuge and placed them at artificial den sites in unoccupied habitat.

Two of the bears have become permanent residents near the relocation point, giving biologists some encouragement that their efforts will meet with success.

"We hope this relocation program will be the key to expanding black bear range and eventually recovering the species, whose numbers have been kept low by habitat loss and fragmentation," Chandler said.

The Service's recovery plan for the Louisiana black bear lists three criteria for full recovery and delisting: existence of at least two viable subpopulations in the bear's historic range; establishment of travel corridors between subpopulations; and protection of habitat supporting the subpopulations and travel corridors.



Poised for a comeback. *Biologists in Louisiana may have discovered how to increase populations of native black bears.* FWS photo: Gary Stolz.

In the northern portion of the Tensas River Basin, just north of Tensas River refuge, lies the Deltic Study Area containing four forested fragments totaling 8,000 acres, surrounded by open fields and bordered to the south by a four-lane interstate highway. More than 50 bears live in these forested fragments, likely representing the densest bear population in North America. The bears have few opportunities to disperse into other forested areas, making this an ideal source for relocating females to unoccupied habitats.

Typically, young male bears disperse into unoccupied areas while young females settle in their mothers' home ranges. As a result, range expansion is slow for females.

Student Program Promotes a Dedicated and Diverse Workforce

In the winter of 1998 and again in 1999, biologists relocated a female and her cub to dens in unoccupied—and otherwise inaccessible—habitat. A strong maternal bond helped prevent the female bears from abandoning their cubs and provided the impetus for the females to remain in the new area.

Biologists fitted both females with radio collars and have been closely monitoring the bears' movements since release. Future plans include larger scale relocations in an attempt to link bear populations in Louisiana. Studies have identified suitable unoccupied habitat in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Biologists are cautiously optimistic, according to Chandler.

“Because of limited female dispersal and the lack of travel corridors, natural colonization of sustainable populations in unoccupied habitat probably won't happen without a little help from humans,” he said. “Distance and lack of forested habitat will probably hinder future unaided travel between these two existing subpopulations.”

However, he said, the black bear recovery team has now seen that relocating females to unoccupied habitats will help to achieve recovery goals. Currently, the Service is working toward the establishment of a new subpopulation of bears in the Red River/Three Rivers Complex of Louisiana. This area, which lies between currently existing bear populations, encompasses more than 100,000 acres of publicly-owned forested land.

Don Anderson, Tensas River NWR, Tallulah, Louisiana



Learning experience. *Karen Branden, one of the 25 SCEP participants working in Region 3 last year, inspects a butterfly for tags at the Prairie Wildlife Learning Center in Minnesota. FWS photo: Chuck Traxler.*

For students interested in natural resources careers, the Student Career Experience Program is an opportunity to develop skills and learn about the Service while earning a salary. The program also lets the Service work with, and evaluate, these students as potential employees before offering them permanent positions.

The Service in Region 3 has been successfully using the SCEP program and its predecessor, the Cooperative Education Program, to recruit new employees since the 1970s.

The program is in its simplest form a paid internship; when school goes back in session, most students are placed in leave-without-pay status until they return to their Service jobs. Benefits of the program extend far beyond a paycheck, though.

Students perform research, implement management practices, work on endangered species issues, learn how the Service accomplishes its mission, and help the public enjoy Service programs. The hands-on experience they gain helps prepare them for Service careers and the program allows project leaders to assess performance and advise students about career options.

Students may apply for SCEP positions throughout the year and project leaders are responsible for hiring and placing the students, working with geographic and programmatic assistant regional directors to develop work plans, and coordinating program needs.

In 1999, 25 Student Career Experience Program participants were working at facilities throughout the eight states of Region 3. They also work with regional programs such as Realty and Federal Aid.

At Minnesota Valley NWR, a unique oasis in the heart of a large metropolitan area, Juancarlos Geise is finishing his first year as a SCEP student. Geise spent last summer literally learning every inch of ground within refuge boundaries along the Minnesota River, delineating and classifying each habitat area to incorporate in a Geographic Information System database.

Refuge Manager Rick Schultz is pleased with Geise's work and happy to have him on staff.

“Juancarlos has done a great job for us this summer,” Schultz said. “I don't think we would have had the resources to complete this project without him. He has been a valuable asset to the refuge.”

Currently studying biology at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, Geise will be qualified for a fish and wildlife biologist position when he graduates.

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Student Program, Diverse Workforce (continued)

Not all students work in the field. Joy Hiromasa has been working in the Region 3 Division of Federal Aid through SCEP since May. Originally from Honolulu, Hiromasa moved to the Great Lakes-Big Rivers region to attend school at the University of Minnesota and experience Midwestern winters. So far, she is happy with both.

Hiromasa's experiences over the summer ranged from learning how Congressional appropriations affect state and federal natural resource programs to reestablishing native prairie and posting boundary signs on refuges. She also traveled along the Mississippi River between Minnesota and Iowa to talk with marina operators and boaters about Federal Aid programs such as the Clean Vessel Act and the Pumpout Grant program.

The site visits are what interest her the most.

"Going out and seeing how the programs are implemented on the ground is the best way to learn about a program," Hiromasa said, a sentiment with which most current and future SCEP participants would most likely agree.

*Chuck Traxler, External Affairs
Ft. Snelling, Minnesota*

United States Unveils Final Submission for April 2000 CITES Conference

Calling for global attention to the impacts of unsustainable trade in marine species, reptiles, amphibians and plants, the Service submitted its final proposals and papers to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora last November. CITES is an international agreement designed to control and regulate global trade in certain wild animals and plants that are or may become threatened with extinction due to commercial trade.

The proposals and papers will be considered during the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2000. The 146 CITES member nations meet approximately every two years to discuss improvements to the treaty and to review trade protections for wildlife.

Appendix I to CITES includes species where it is determined that any commercial trade is detrimental to the survival of the species. No commercial trade is allowed in Appendix I species, and noncommercial trade in such species is allowed if it does not jeopardize the species' survival in the wild. Permits are required to export and import Appendix I species.

Appendix II includes species where it has been determined that commercial trade may be detrimental to the survival of the species if not strictly controlled. Trade in these species is regulated through the use of export permits.

Appendix III includes species where there is some question as to the potential negative impact of commercial trade. Permits are used to monitor trade in native species.

U.S. proposals to CITES include:

Whale Sharks and Great White Sharks

Sharks are more vulnerable than most other fish because of their delayed maturation, relatively low rate of reproduction and longevity. The United States is proposing the whale shark for Appendix II and the great white for Appendix I.



Imperiled. *The spotted turtle is one of a number of species for which the United States has proposed international protection through CITES. FWS photo: Gary Stolz.*

Seahorses

With Australia, the United States is seeking a discussion on the conservation of and trade in the more than 200 types of seahorses and related species. Seahorses inhabit shallow coastal waters, and their habitat is often located in heavily populated areas and subject to pollution and degradation.

Sea Birds and Global Fisheries

The United States is calling for closer cooperation between CITES and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and asking CITES to work with the FAO to conserve sea birds, sharks and global fisheries and review the CITES criteria for listing marine species.

Reptiles and Amphibians

While environmental factors recently have been highly publicized in declines of reptiles and amphibians around the world, overharvest for human food and the pet trade is contributing to this decline. The United States is proposing several for protection against trade, including the Sonoran green toad, spotted turtle and pancake tortoise.

Shorebird Sister Schools Program Flying High

Eastern Hemisphere Tarantulas

Found only in the forests of southern India and Sri Lanka, the low reproductive rate of these tarantulas cannot keep up with the current demand for pets. Captive breeding is rarely successful and not enough spiders are produced to satisfy the trade. Sri Lanka and the United States believe that all Eastern hemisphere tarantula species should be included in Appendix II.

Asian Pangolins

Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the United States are asking that the three species of Asian pangolins, the Chinese, Indian and Malay, be transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I because these mammals, which resemble anteaters, are heavily traded and little information is available on the health of wild populations.

North American Gyrfalcon

The gyrfalcon is found in the arctic and subarctic regions of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Iceland, Europe and Asia. Because the Service has no evidence that this particular population has ever been threatened by habitat loss, nest robbing or trade, the United States is proposing to transfer the North American gyrfalcon from Appendix I to Appendix II with a special restriction continuing a trade ban on all wild gyrfalcons.

Hollywood Lignum-vitae

Once abundant in the Florida Keys, the West Indies and Central America, deforestation and felling for timber has contributed to the this valuable timber species' extirpation in most of its Caribbean island habitat. To help ensure the health of the remaining populations of this rare tree, the United States is requesting that it be transferred from Appendix II to Appendix I.

*Patricia Fisher, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Dedicated participants in the ever-growing Shorebird Sister Schools Program didn't let a major hurricane dampen their spirits as they attended the first Atlantic Flyway Shorebird Sister Schools workshop last fall.

The Shorebird Sister Schools Program is an Internet-based education program designed for broad audiences to track the migration of Arctic-nesting shorebirds from their wintering grounds to their nesting grounds in Alaska and the Canadian Arctic. The program includes a Web site, an e-mail list server and a K-12 curriculum. Partners from 23 different countries and 36 U.S. states are involved in the program through pen pal exchanges. Now it has expanded beyond Alaska with the Atlantic Flyway project.

The result of a partnership among Manomet Bird Observatory, NCTC's Division of Education Outreach and the Region 7 External Affairs Division, the Atlantic Flyway workshop was scheduled for September 16-17, 1999, at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on Virginia's Eastern Shore. Twenty-nine people signed up for the workshop only to find out that one of the strongest hurricanes in history, Hurricane Floyd, was forecast to hit the Atlantic coast on those two days.

At the last minute, the workshop had to be moved inland and the National Conservation Training Center graciously offered to host it in Shepherdstown, West Virginia—far from Floyd's predicted path. Twelve dedicated and energetic souls grabbed their things, hopped in their cars and made it to West Virginia. Though they saw some rain, by the afternoon of the last day the sun was shining and they were able to conduct the field trip section of the workshop.

Although they knew they wouldn't see many shorebirds, workshop participants were surprised and delighted to hear a killdeer during their field trip, said Program Director Heather Johnson-Schultz.

The following week the enthusiasm and momentum from the workshop continued as Johnson-Schultz conducted a distance learning broadcast for the Shorebird Sister Schools Program from the training center. The two-hour program, aired across the country, taught environmental educators, biologists and managers about the program and how they can weave it into current programs at their stations or schools.

The new Atlantic Coast addendum to the Arctic-nesting shorebirds curriculum is now available on the Web at <http://www.fws.gov/r7envd/sssp.html>.



Reaching out. Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark and Assistant Director for External Affairs Tom Melius check out the new Service display. Produced in 3 sizes—briefcase, tabletop and the Nomadic display seen here—the exhibit is distributed by the National Conservation Training Center. See article, page 26. FWS photo: Nan Rollison.

Office Staff Digs in for a Worthy Cause



Good food for a good cause. *Fred Pinkney works in the Chesapeake Bay Field Office's vegetable garden, produce from which was donated to a local charity to feed the hungry. FWS photo: Laurie Hewitt.*

To Fred Pinkney, an environmental contaminants biologist and avid gardener, a sun-drenched plot of grass in back of the Chesapeake Bay Field Office seemed the ideal place for a vegetable garden. Then, while looking up some information about gardening, Pinkney came across a program called Plant A Row for the Hungry, through which gardeners plant an extra row and donate the extra produce to local charities.

Pinkney thought the program would be a perfect activity for staff at the Annapolis, Maryland, office. His co-workers agreed to take part, replacing the unused turf in that sunny spot with a vegetable garden and donating the entire harvest to local food banks.

"We already have a native plant area, called BayScapes, in front of the office to encourage schools, homeowners and businesses to manage their landscapes to reduce pesticides and fertilizers and provide food and habitat for wildlife," Pinkney explained. "Participating in the Plant A Row program fits right in with our conservation ethic. Using some of the office grounds to help feed hungry people is consistent with our office's goal of contributing to the community and the staff's personal goals to help people in need."

Further, staff members who worked on the project already possessed many of the necessary items to get started, Pinkney said. They contributed seeds, plants and garden tools, and the group also pooled

small monetary contributions for additional seeds and plants, compost, and a fence to keep out the rabbits.

Before work and during their lunch hours, staff members planted, watered, weeded and harvested beans, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, and squash. This season the group donated 209 pounds of food to local shelters and food banks, according to Pinkney.

But the Plant A Row garden at the Chesapeake Bay Field Office served as more than just a source of food for less fortunate people.

"Growing a Plant A Row garden at work was truly a team-building experience," said Pinkney. "Our garden also served to foster a sense of community at work and the project brought us together and created a real connection to local neighborhoods."

Those interested may take a virtual look at the garden through the Chesapeake Bay Field Office Web site at <http://www.fws.gov/r5cbfo>.

Plant A Row for the Hungry is a national campaign launched by the Garden Writers Association of America in 1995. For information about the Plant a Row for the Hungry program, contact the GWAA at 703/257 1032 or check Web at <http://www.gwaa.org>.

Kathy Reshetiloff, Chesapeake Bay Field Office, Annapolis, Maryland

Partners and Puppies Help Preserve the Prairie

Forming partnerships with non-profit groups, private industry and the media is nothing new for Service employees. But add a few black Labrador puppies to the mix and interesting things begin to happen.

Credit for one of the Service's more recent successful partnership goes in large measure to Raven, the black Labrador retriever from Minnesota who started the whole thing by delivering a batch of puppies. Credit too goes to the fellow who keeps Raven's food dish full, Ron Schara, host of ESPN's "Back Roads with Ron & Raven."

Teaming with Midwest outdoor retailer Gander Mountain and the non-profit conservation organization Pheasants Forever, Ron and Raven helped launch a unique marketing campaign to help save prairie habitat and support the Service's Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.

It began as a simple idea: sell chances to "adopt" one of Raven's puppies and use the proceeds for habitat projects. This idea soon blossomed into a full-scale marketing effort, culminating in the sale of plush "Gander Gang" pups through Gander Mountain retail stores around the Midwest. Five dollars from every purchase would be donated to Pheasants Forever's Prairie Wetlands Heritage Initiative, matched by the Service and other partners, and used for the acquisition of prairie habitat.

Promotional spots on local television helped spark the adoption campaign, along with flyers distributed at more than 1,300 Minnesota State Lottery locations. And thanks to a direct mail campaign to Pheasants Forever chapters and in-store advertising, sales of the plush canines—each attired with a replica of Raven's signature red bandanna—were a big hit. Nearly 7,000 plush pooches were sold during the first year of the program.

The proceeds from the adoption program and sale were matched by challenge grants from the Service's North American Wetland Conservation Act grants program and the state of Minnesota. According to Jim Leach, regional NAWCA coordinator, the \$100,000 raised through the matching grant was applied toward the purchase of Minnesota prairie tracts, including a 726-acre acquisition in Redwood County near the Minnesota River.



The "Gander Gang". Proceeds from the sale of these plush puppies were matched by funds from the North American Wetland Conservation Act and the state of Minnesota to raise over \$100,000 for the acquisition and preservation of prairie uplands and habitat. FWS photo.

Beyond waterfowl, the Prairie Wetlands Heritage Initiative will benefit many grassland species, including pheasants, songbirds, shorebirds and other related wildlife. Over the course of the prairie initiative, nearly \$3.5 million will be invested in Midwestern prairie projects.

Based on the success of the 1998 campaign, Pheasants Forever and Gander Mountain launched a similar fund-raising event for the 1999 holiday season. As for Raven, no word yet on the possibility of another batch of pups in the offing—at least she's not saying at this point.

*Dan Sobieck, External Affairs,
Ft. Snelling, Minnesota*



Signs with Flair at Anchorage Wetland. To increase awareness and gain support to help protect Klatt Bog, one of a few remaining large string bogs in Anchorage, the Service, in cooperation with Carr Gottstein Properties, developed and installed two new interpretive signs last summer. The signs are located on dikes built to help retain water in the bog and protect adjacent houses from flooding. The dikes have inadvertently become trails where neighbors walk, run and exercise their dogs.

Maureen de Zeeuw, a biologist at the Ecological Services Field Office in Anchorage, created signs combining text, graphics and her own hand-drawn artwork. Her creations even attracted the attention of the local media

"We hope that people will find these signs to be eye-catching and informative, and will learn more about the unique values and history of this local wetland," said de Zeeuw. "The signs illustrate a variety of birds and plants living in the bog, and help people learn more about what they can do to help protect Klatt Bog." Text by Marcia Heer, Ecological Services, Anchorage, Alaska. FWS photo: Connie M.J. Barclay

Setting Standards for Migratory Bird Monitoring

The ecosystem approach focuses on conserving species and habitat in 53 watersheds nationwide. From ecosystem teams have sprung a number of local or species-specific efforts such as the Southeast region's Area III Biologists Committee, a group dedicated to arresting migratory bird declines in the southern portion of the region.

Originally formed in 1997 as the South Florida Migratory Birds Committee, this cross-program team has gone through several name changes and expanded its focus to include all of Area III—eastern Alabama, western Georgia and Florida. The committee now includes biologists from national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries and ecological services field offices.

After establishing its focus the committee quickly hammered out its objectives: monitor the status and trends of migratory bird populations and generate an abundance index; associate management practices or habitat type with abundances and trends for migratory bird populations; monitor bird population trends in representative habitat types on Area III refuges; and develop standard spreadsheet and database programs to facilitate information-sharing among participating biologists.

The timing of the committee's work has closely followed recent legislation and internal documents calling for improved biological programs.

"The National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act of 1997 directs the Service to monitor the status and trends of fish, wildlife and plants and requires the agency to manage the refuge system cohesively and consistently across all regions," said Lou Hinds, former South Florida Ecosystem Team Leader and refuge manager at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. "*Fulfilling the Promise*, the long-term road map for the refuge system, also addressed the improvement act's directives including species inventory and monitoring needs."

However, biologists needed a standardized data collection format and a centralized data repository to show population trends. Last February, the group's Database Subcommittee discussed migratory bird



Top priority. *The Area III Biologists' Committee is looking at ways to count and conserve migratory bird species such as the least tern. FWS photo: Luther Goldman.*

monitoring protocol standardization, database development, and personnel, software and training needs, and the committee recently adopted standard spreadsheet and database management software for monitoring. The group also adopted a Forest Service point-count database originally developed for Sumter National Forest in South Carolina, enhancing opportunities to share data with other resource management agencies.

Biologists will train in database development and GIS applications to integrate GIS technology with monitoring databases, allowing efficient and effective assessment of management needs. Training and applied software use will allow biologists to address resource issues beyond migratory bird monitoring and to more effectively use computer databases to compile and report on other important regional and refuge-specific species.

"The Service must assume a leadership role in this initiative by creating partnerships with state and federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to work together," Hinds said. "This initiative is all about ecosystem management based on knowledge across landscapes and physiographic areas. As we look at the big picture with contributions from many solid participants, this initiative can even allow us all to be part of a system of refuges."

Jorge L. Coppen, J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR, Sanibel, Florida

Wetlands—Where Are You?

How does the Service make citizens aware of the value of all wetlands to wildlife and people—not to mention where wetlands are located?

The National Wetlands Inventory has one solution: an interactive wetlands mapping program that anyone can access on the World Wide Web. Users who go to <http://www.nwi.fws.gov/> may simply enter their address or ZIP code and the mapper will show them where there are wetlands in the neighborhoods where they work and play.

The site is already a hit, according to National Wetlands Inventory Coordinator Bill Wilen. During its first month of operation the Wetlands Interactive Mapper allowed users to produce 17,793 wetland maps using their desktop computers—without any special software and with just a few mouse clicks. Users with nongovernment Internet addresses produced 13,588, or more than 76 percent, of these maps.

"The goal of the mapper is to provide the information the public needs concerning their local wetlands and deepwater habitats," Wilen said. "With that information, folks can identify opportunities for involvement or issues of concern and voice informed opinions about wetlands—and by extension other conservation issues."

"The goal is to put more information into the hands of individuals, families and communities, and if the number of hits this site is getting is any indication, we're succeeding."

Charlie Grymes, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

Commemorating a Tragedy of Historic Proportions



Remembrance.
Service firefighter Mike Granger helped commemorate the 50th anniversary of the devastating Mann Gulch fire. FWS photo: Phil Street.

firefighters who died on the mountain. Granger was given the name of Philip McVey. Like most other smokejumpers, McVey, according to a book about the fire, was a very fit and athletic young man. He and three other smokejumpers ran the farthest up a ridge that day before being overcome by smoke and flames.

Smokejumpers and others who fight wildfires have learned many lessons from the tragedy at Mann Gulch. Following that fire, the Ten Standard Firefighting Orders were developed and they have been taught to thousands of firefighters since Mann Gulch. The most important principle: Fight fire aggressively but provide for safety first.

On August 5, 1949, a crew of smokejumpers exited their plane over Montana's Mann Gulch, which was consumed with raging fire. History was made before the day was over, though 13 lives were lost in the process.

These men, an elite group of firefighters, lost their lives suppressing what is now the most famous wildfire in North American history. The Mann Gulch incident represented the first time such a large group of firefighters lost their lives fighting a wildfire. The incident was later chronicled in movies and books.

A half century later, 13 firefighters retraced the steps these men made in their attempts to escape a relatively calm fire that unexpectedly "blew up." Mike Granger, the fire management officer at Montana's Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, represented the Fish & Wildlife Service at a special wreath laying ceremony last August to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Mann Gulch fire. The event was coordinated by the U.S. Forest Service.

Federal, volunteer and Montana State firefighters participated in the ceremony. Each of the thirteen participants received a wreath and the name of one of the

Nearly every wildfire class teaches students about Mann Gulch and examines the common denominators among fatal wildfires. Firefighters are required to review the Standards for Survival each year.

"Although firefighting has become increasingly safe since that fateful day in 1949, it is still a very dangerous occupation," Granger says. "It is very sobering to realize that nearly every year, firefighters lose their lives protecting our public lands. Hopefully, the increased emphasis on safety and training will eliminate the future need for ceremonies marking such tragic anniversaries."

Regional Office Gallery Hosts Unique Exhibit

Above and Below, an exhibition of hand painted silk quilts by Amherst, Massachusetts, fabric designer Sally Dillon, was featured in a display in the Northeast Regional Office Gallery in Hadley, Massachusetts, November 16 through December 14.

Dillon, whose work portrays wildlife and geological formations says she is inspired by the landscapes of the United States. The central panel of each quilt features a painting derived from an aerial view of an area surrounded by plants, animals and geological phenomena unique to that environment.

During an opening, the artist demonstrated her technique of painting on silk fabric with French dyes. She also discussed with guests the meanings behind each quilt and the locations represented in her images. Her show included several examples of silk clothing with wildlife images hand painted onto fabric. Article by Kathy Zeamer, External Affairs, Hadley, Massachusetts. FWS photo.



The Internet: A Conservation Tool

How Does it DO That?

Start

The first Americans who crossed the Bering land bridge thousands of years ago used every resource available to succeed in their new environment. The Fish & Wildlife Service can do the same with the resources of the Internet.

With the Internet, every Service employee—not just outreach or computer specialists—can help the public understand how we conserve the nature of America. If we are to protect fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for our children and grand children to enjoy, we must become partners with the American public. We can create effective partnerships through Web communications—our home page, e-mail and listservers—as well as by traditional means.

Those first pioneers were willing to try new ideas to succeed in a new world—and so can the Service. Read on in this special section to see what's new with the Service's activities on the information superhighway.

Service Web Contacts

For a list of regional and headquarters Web publishing contacts, refer to the article on page 6 of the September/October *Fish & Wildlife News*, or go to the Service's Intranet Web publishing page, <http://sii.fws.gov/webpublish/vpclist.htm>.

Or...Answers to Internet Questions You Were Afraid to Ask

The Internet is, in its most basic form, a highway for electronic transport. No matter what route you use, you can expect the telecommunications highway to be jammed with traffic occasionally. On bad days, everything will crawl in the electronic equivalent of first gear.

Like interstate highways, the Internet carries different vehicles. E-mail is packaged in one format, video files in another. The text of Web pages is in HTML format while images are in GIF or JPG format. Fortunately, computers are now smart enough to translate formats automatically, which is one reason the Web has become so popular in the last few years. If you receive a digital photograph in JPG format, you generally can open it with no special software required.

Web users with browser software—Internet Explorer or Netscape, for example—enter addresses (URLs) into browser windows and click on the mouse. Assuming your computer is connected to the Internet (often through a dial-up connection using a modem), the computer then retrieves the file from the destination and paints text and images on the screen of the monitor.

The Service has about a dozen different computers that are destinations on the Internet. These Web servers store the files and “serve” them upon request to customers.

When someone enters www.fws.gov in the address window of their browser, it will trigger the connection to a specific computer in Denver. The Internet has address standards just like paper mail. Your home address (with ZIP Code) is unique to one location so the Postal Service knows where to deliver mail. Similarly, www.fws.gov is a unique address that connects to only one computer, thanks to worldwide naming standards. If you enter an address that does not exist, you'll see a message like “404-File Not Found.”



Web publishers—the people who create the files you view on the screen—have to be savvy enough to know how to get words and images into the right package and where to put it. To make it easier for customers to find Service information on the Internet, we are now naming our sites with easy-to-remember Internet addresses such as volunteers.fws.gov and fisheries.fws.gov.

*Charlie Grymes, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Look Ma...No Software!

The Service has 20,000 pages and 300 photos on the World Wide Web, a figure that may seem enormous to some but is, in the world of the Service's Internet gurus, merely a drop in the bucket.

After all, according to Sky Bristol of the Division of Information Resources Management, the Service has 80,000 pages and 10,000 images yet to post on the Internet.

When all is said and done, the Service will have 600 operational Web sites, Bristol said, and every office will have basic reference material available on the Internet for the ever more technologically demanding general public.

"It doesn't require x-ray vision or a crystal ball to realize that soon all businesses and offices with a phone and a front desk will have a Web site," pointed out Bristol. "Even small offices without full-time secretarial assistance will need to publish some material on the Internet.

"Are you almost ready to join the crowd?," Bristol asked.

It's now easier than ever before to create a Web site for your office, thanks to some creative work by Bristol, who recently moved from the Region 2 regional office to the Division of IRM in Denver. A new, "low-tech" tool enables every organizational unit to create and update its own home page.

"There's no muss, no fuss and no software required, assuming you already can browse the Web with an Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator browser," Bristol said. "Simply go to a secure Service Web site (<http://offices.fws.gov/EasyWebTool/>), fill in a form, click on a button and get your office's unique information published on one home page.

Why should your office bother with this? For a number of reasons, according to Bristol. For example, an office Web page can answer frequently asked questions about office hours and basic functions, freeing staff to deal with more substantive issues.

"In the time it takes to drink a cup of coffee, every office can create a home page that explains what it does, why the work is important and what others can do to help. That page will be online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, building support for the resources we manage—and reducing the need for the public to contact us by phone and e-mail to get basic information," Bristol said.

Ten thousand people visit the Service's Web sites and more people are becoming Web-savvy every year, he emphasized.

Bristol also emphasized that this tool is intended for beginners. As employees hone their Web publishing skills, offices may build a more graphically and informationally complex sites that expand on the standardized pages.

For more information on the fill-in-the-blank tool or other Web-related issues, contact your Web Publishing Council representative (on the Intranet at <http://sii.fws.gov/webpublish/wpelist.htm>) or Charlie Grymes at Web@fws.gov.

*Charlie Grymes, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Here's Your Chance to Speak Up!

Send

Fill out the form below and mail your responses to Web Survey, c/o Charlie Grymes, USFWS Public Affairs, 1849 C Street, NW, Room 3358, Washington, DC 20240; fax to 202/219 2428; or e-mail to charlie_grymes@fws.gov.

What five things do you like best about the Service's Web site?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

What five pieces of information would you expect to find on the Service's Web site?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

What five pieces of information are not on the Service's Web site that should be?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | |

If you don't use the Web now, what would trigger you to use it?

End

Mall Offers Special Outreach Opportunity

Patrons at a Fairbanks, Alaska, shopping mall were distracted from their shopping by a unique—and entertaining—celebration last October 9th and 10th. Thousands of shoppers at the Bentley Mall participated in interactive outreach activities sponsored by the Service in celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Crowds of people lined up to catch salmon. Children wielded balloon swords, tasked by a powerful magician to defend refuges from the latest evil plans of Darth Vader. Visitors practiced counting eggs in a bird nest using a pole and mirror. And people admired a cake exquisitely frosted as a beaver in its habitat, complete with dam, fallen logs and dead fish along a stream.

Fairbanks is home to the headquarters of Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats national wildlife refuges, which together comprise nearly a third of the 93-million acre refuge system. A team of employees from these three stations got together five years ago, just after their first Refuge Week event, to brainstorm ways to more effectively reach people with messages about these areas and the system.

“We had to overcome two big challenges to outreach in the Fairbanks area,” said Ted Heuer, manager of the Yukon Flats refuge. “Our offices are located in the sterile Federal Building and Courthouse, and the nearest refuge land, not accessible by road, is more than 70 miles away.”

The team thought an event in the Federal Building or the local Public Lands Information Center would attract people who already supported wildlife and wildlands. They wanted to reach people who knew little or nothing about their local refuges, the refuge system or the Service—in a new, fun and convenient way.

“Realizing that a majority of Fairbanksans take to the malls when the cold weather hits, we decided to try outreach at a local shopping area,” Heuer said.

The October event was the 4th annual National Wildlife Refuges Celebration at the Bentley Mall. This family-oriented event draws between 3,500 and 5,000 people; portions of the event are broadcast live, with staff interviews, on local radio stations, reaching thousands more. Along with



Just like this. *Refuge employee Tom Early demonstrates a fishing simulator to an eager audience. FWS photo.*

exhibits and computer puzzles, the event offers magic shows, tattoos of the blue goose (washable, of course) and a fishing simulator.

Students work on entries for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest and make stained-glass window art; employees demonstrate the work they do; and visitors enjoy the Baked Alaska Critters Contest, in which edible creations of wildlife are displayed and auctioned, with proceeds donated to charity.

The team declared the day, and the concept of shopping mall outreach in Fairbanks, highly successful for several reasons.

“First, we more effectively reach a cross-section of people, including a higher percentage of those unfamiliar with the refuge system, because they don’t have to go anywhere special,” Heuer explained. “We reach them where they already are in a way that makes it easy for them to participate and enjoy. Second, we touch the public positively with up-beat activities, unique experiences and enthusiastic employees.

“Third, this time with the public and the influx of energy it brings helps reinvigorate, focus and unite refuge employees to better understand and do our part to accomplish the mission of the refuge system,” Heuer concluded.

Tom Edgerton, Arctic NWR, Fairbanks, Alaska

RO Hosts Partners’ Reception

In celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week, Region 7 hosted its first Partners’ Reception in Anchorage on October 13.

Regional Director David B. Allen welcomed 75 guests at the 1999 National Wildlife Refuge Partners Reception, followed by Greg Siekaniec, deputy chief of the Division of Refuges in Washington, D.C. A representative from Governor Tony Knowles’ office also greeted the group and read an official state proclamation designating October 9–16 as National Wildlife Refuge Week in Alaska.

Keynote speaker Dave Cline, formerly with the National Audubon Society, related his experience working with the refuge system and emphasized the importance of partnerships in refuge management. Following a screening of the film “America’s National Wildlife Refuge System: Where Wildlife Comes First,” Regional Director Allen presented several awards.

Paul John and his colleague Myron Naneng accepted an award for the work the Association of Village Council Presidents have done for many years in support of waterfowl management on the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta.

Allen also recognized four other important partners: Ducks Unlimited, the Alaska Natural History Association, the Homer Chamber of Commerce and The Nature Conservancy.

Cathy Rezabeck, External Affairs, Anchorage, Alaska

Gone with the Cranes: Norton Departs After 12th Successful Crane Festival

Last November, thousands upon thousands of migrating waterfowl and sandhill cranes made their annual sojourn to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in the Middle Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico. A proportionate number of humans flocked to the 12th Annual Festival of the Cranes sponsored by the refuge, the city of Socorro and the Socorro County Chamber of Commerce.

For four days, November 18–21, the refuge was abuzz with presentations, exhibits, tours, guided hikes, field trips, demonstrations and nature photography lessons. But the real draw, of course, was the spectacle of these majestic migrants.

Refuge Manager Phil Norton, who helped initiate the first festival more than a decade ago, said the most popular event every year is the evening fly-in.

“The breathtaking sight of thousands of sandhill cranes and light geese descending over the marshes of the refuge at sunset is an unforgettable experience,” Norton said. “Especially when you add in the burbles of circling cranes calling to their companions on the marsh, and the cackling of the geese. It’s just impossible not to be moved by these timeless rituals surrounding nature.”

After 14 years at the refuge, Norton himself will be migrating, winging his way west to take another job as manager of Klamath NWR in northern California. In his impressive 32-year career with the Service, Norton has served at various refuges, mostly throughout the Southwest. His management philosophy is to blend with biological focus the many facets of habitat and wildlife management, public use, outreach programs, facility maintenance, and many other activities into a complete refuge program.

His tenacious adherence to this belief has earned Norton recognition as an outstanding refuge manager by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Audubon Society.

The 12th Annual Festival of the Cranes was an infinitely special event for Norton.

“I have put my love into this refuge and every year, with the coming of the cranes, I feel ultimately rewarded,” he said.

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Nature Nurtures Local Economy

The spectacle of the sandhill cranes has proved to be a shining example of ecotourism at its finest. Indeed, local merchants have become bird lovers by default. Mary Gillard, proprietor of the Val Verde Steakhouse, said the event “provides huge economic benefits to local businesses.”

And, she added, “during the event, business is booming and probably 80 percent of my customers are the out-of-town birders because all the locals are usually out volunteering at the festival.”

Grooming Wildlife Crimestoppers of the Future

A new federal-state partnership promises to open the door to careers in natural resource law enforcement for students at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, a historically black college in Princess Anne, Maryland.

At an October ceremony on campus, University President Dolores Spikes and representatives of the Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources signed a cooperative agreement that will create a new course of study in the school's Criminal Justice Department. An academic program focused on natural resource law enforcement will help students meet entry-level qualifications for law enforcement positions with the three participating government agencies.

Natural resource law enforcement is a field that has not traditionally attracted large numbers of African Americans or other minority job applicants. The partnership with the Maryland school, however, should encourage young people of diverse backgrounds to consider the career challenges and rewards involved in policing public lands and protecting wildlife and other natural resources.

Both the Bureau of Land Management and the Service have significant law enforcement responsibilities. BLM rangers and special agents ensure public safety and protect resources on 264 million acres of public lands, enforcing both federal criminal laws and land use regulations. Service refuge officers safeguard resources and visitors to the nation's more than 500 national wildlife refuges, while the Division of Law Enforcement investigates wildlife crimes throughout the country and monitors U.S. wildlife trade.

Under the new agreement, enforcement officials from the three agencies will work with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore to develop a course of instruction that

addresses resource conservation issues and the skills required for this law enforcement field. Government representatives will recommend appropriate course content and serve as instructors for specialized segments of the new curriculum, which will include both classroom studies and fieldwork.

The Service's Office for Diversity and Civil Rights and Office of External Programs, BLM's Human Resources Directorate, and Maryland DNR officials worked together to negotiate the agreement with the university and coordinate appropriate law enforcement participation in the partnership.

Sandy Cleva, Office of Law Enforcement, Arlington, Virginia



Clear Message. New service outreach products carry our new theme. (See article on page 26.)

Service Helps Tribes Survey Big Game

The late October morning sky was clear and blue except for a small gathering of cirrus clouds peeking over New Mexico's Sandia Mountains.

John Antonio, the Southwest region's Native American liaison, boarded a 206 B-3 Jet Ranger helicopter and was flown to the Isleta Pueblo Reservation to help tribe members perform an aerial survey of pronghorn antelope and mule deer. Antonio's survey results would help the Pueblo manage big game and determine the feasibility of establishing a hunting program on the reservation.

Here and there beneath the aircraft's shifting shadow herds of cattle and single cows stood motionless like statues. Roadrunners dashed in and out of brush, hunting for lizards.

The 211,000-acre Chihuahua desert reservation is mostly open land spreading between the Manzano Mountains to the east, the Ladron Mountains to the south and the Lucero Mesa in the west. The trickling Rio Puerco dissects the region, offering refuge, forage and drink to its animal residents.

From Antonio's vantage point, hoofprints dotted sandy creekbeds and clumps of grass, shrubs, juniper, and tumbleweed oscillated under the wind of the helicopter rotors. Here and there beneath the aircraft's shifting shadow herds of cattle and single cows stood motionless like statues. Roadrunners dashed in and out of brush, hunting for lizards.

Antonio, a wildlife biologist by training, was trying to capture a fleeting moment, a biological snapshot of the infinitesimal cycle of time. His survey would cover the tribe's newly-acquired Comanche Ranch, a 118,000-acre tract.

As the chopper shot from point to point, covering the bulk of the area in quarter-mile overlapping grids, Antonio read the signs of life. From about 100 feet off the ground he spotted the white rump of a female antelope as she darted away followed by at least 12 others, including three large bucks.

The chopper swung around, nosed forward, and dove in pursuit of the stampede, giving Antonio the chance to count and classify the herd in terms of bucks, does and fawns. The animals raced gracefully across the panoramic landscape, just below the motorized intruder. The instant the chopper climbed away, the herd fell into a relaxed jog.

"I'm sure it's a bit annoying for them," admitted Antonio as he entered data on a survey form. "But it's for their own benefit in the long run, that's for sure."

When the survey was complete, Antonio would tally up the information and prepare a report for the tribal council which would include numbers of pronghorn antelope and mule deer, projections on total populations, and harvest recommendations should the tribe consider a limited hunting season for tribal members for ceremonial or recreational reasons.

As a means to raise revenue for future big game management on the reservation, the tribe may also opt to sell a few permits to those willing to pay a premium price to hunt trophy-sized bucks.

A co-founder of the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, Antonio is a member of the Laguna Pueblo. He has spent a great deal of his career assisting tribes throughout the Southwest and other parts of the country with big game inventories and other wildlife management activities. Antonio was quick to point out that tribes nationwide have established excellent big game management programs on their reservations, especially in the Southwest.

"Apache tribes like the Mescalero, Jicarilla, White Mountain and San Carlos have been considered leaders in managing trophy elk hunting programs," he said. "The Jicarilla is world renowned for an outstanding trophy mule deer program. And many sportsmen in search of the majestic desert bighorn sheep must wait their turn to hunt on the Hualapai Reservation in Grand Canyon."

Today, despite severe fragmentation of land, Native Americans remain responsible stewards of their natural resources. As new technologies have developed and evolved, so too have resource management strategies on tribal lands, and the Service—with the help of people like John Antonio—is assisting tribes in determining and implementing these strategies.

"The Service is committed to working with tribes, and John is doing an outstanding job," said Nancy Kaufman, regional director for the Southwest region.

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Service Employee Travels to Ecuador to Promote Biodiversity



Region 3 Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist Jane West recently traveled more than 3,400 miles from Minnesota to Ecuador as part of the “Partnership for Diversity” program which promotes biodiversity conservation in developing countries. The program is part of a joint effort among the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of the Interior and the Peace Corps.

One of two Service employees selected by the Interior Department to travel to Ecuador (the other Service participant was Jane Westphall of Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge in Quincy, Illinois), West provided informational briefings, classroom instruction and field exercises on biological monitoring theory and techniques. Participants obtained hands on experience with mist-netting, nest searches, and bird censusing, and learned techniques for monitoring mammals, reptiles, vegetation and fire.

West worked with park guards and biologists from the four protected areas—Cayambe Coca and Antisana ecological reserves, and Cotopaxi and Sumaco Napo Galeras national parks—comprising the Condor Bioserve. Encompassing 1.6 million acres and fifteen ecological life zones, the area supports the largest concentration of biological diversity in the Western Hemisphere, as well as a section of Western Amazon rainforest widely considered to be one of the three highest conservation priorities in the world.

Ecuador has taken important steps toward maintaining biological diversity by designating protected areas where representatives of native ecosystem types and successional stages occur. The Partnership for Diversity program, West said, is developing partnerships to ensure continued biological diversity in the United States, Ecuador and throughout the world.

“Looking at things from an ecoregional perspective, the importance of these protected areas can not be ignored,” she said. “Because of the ecological importance of these countries, the conservation techniques they implement will have international effects. We have learned, particularly through our experience with migratory birds and Great Lakes issues, that one country cannot effect change without international partnerships.”

Migratory birds are a shared international resource with approximately six billion birds migrating between North America and the neotropics of Central and South America. These migrants spend only a third to a half of their lives on their breeding grounds in North America. Of the 650 species nesting in the United States, 406 species have been recorded as nonbreeders in Latin America and the Caribbean. Approximately a quarter of nonbreeding species have been recorded in Ecuador, West said.

*Chuck Traxler, External Affairs,
Ft. Snelling, Minnesota*

Learning.
Ecuadorian biologists and park guards conduct a survey as part of their training on biological monitoring techniques. FWS photo: Jane West.

Outreach Grants Program Takes Off in Region 5

A small grants program supporting outreach efforts in the Service’s Northeast region has taken flight, seeking to fund initiatives that support products, activities, and other projects focusing on increased visibility, awareness, and understanding of the Service’s work in the Northeast.

The program fledged last June after the Region 5 Regional Outreach Team developed its vision with “support to the field” in mind. The 12-member team, comprised of both regional office and field employees, manages all aspects of the program and works directly with grant recipients to provide support and assistance throughout the process.

Region 5 outreach grants support unique and creative efforts that might be left unfunded in the normal budget process, said Regional Director Ronald E. Lambertson.

“The program gives special attention to proposals that address the Director’s priorities or regional areas of emphasis and those that might benefit the entire region or be applied Service- wide,” Lambertson said. “We also look for proposals with matching funds or partnership commitments attached to them.”

Spence Conley, Region 5 assistant regional director for External Affairs, serves as the management liaison to the Regional Outreach Team. He praised the grant program as a tool to promote effective outreach projects.

“The team has done a great job of evaluating the proposals and selecting those that provide the greatest opportunities to promote the work of the Service in the Northeast,” Conley said.

The outreach team accepted proposals from field offices, ecosystem teams and regional office program areas. This year, the team awarded 10 grants in the amount of \$750 each. Projects included:

■ *Operation Water Chestnut, Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge*—designed to heighten awareness of the threat of invasive water chestnut plants to the four-state Connecticut River watershed. The project includes outreach programs, displays, a water chestnut clean-up and printed materials.

Creating Habitat With Fire



Worthy project. Service employees and volunteers removed four tons of water chestnut from the Connecticut River. FWS photo.

■ *Ohio River Mussels Poster, Ohio River Valley Ecosystem Team*—aimed at highlighting mussels, an often overlooked but important component of the Ohio River watershed. The poster will depict 40 native mussels and list their conservation status. The back of the poster will include information on mussel life cycles, anatomy and economic uses, and a bibliography.

■ *Beach Perspectives, Long Island Field Office*—focused on coastal processes, piping plovers, and the importance of protecting and conserving coastal species, this project consists of the development of educational materials and a series of teacher workshops.

■ *Adopt-A-Salmon Family for the Early Years, Central New England Anadromous Fish Coordinator's Office*—curriculum materials and educational activities for early elementary school students who participate in the Adopt-A-Salmon Family interdisciplinary watershed education/outreach program. Students will come to understand and appreciate the many challenges facing salmon.

■ *Lead Sinker Outreach, New England Field Office*—provides anglers with non-toxic sinkers and information on the impacts of lead tackle.

■ *Heal Our Streams, West Virginia Field Office*—a pamphlet to explain natural stream restoration principles and offer design assistance to private landowners, Clean Water Act permit applicants, watershed groups and government officials in West Virginia.

■ *Penobscot River Festival, Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery*—support for the annual Penobscot River Festival in Maine. The festival raises awareness of the natural and cultural resources of the Penobscot River and reaches 2,000 middle school teachers and their teachers and at least 50 Maine nonprofits, businesses, and state and federal tribal agencies.

■ *Virginia Fisheries Partnership, Richmond Law Enforcement Field Office*—aimed at deterring fisheries violations by raising public awareness of the state/federal law enforcement partnership, including enforcement of the Lacey Act. This effort includes a fact sheet on protecting marine fisheries in Virginia, and a campaign to make personal contacts with commercial and recreational fishers, seafood buyers, charter boat owners and the general public.

The Regional Outreach Team is evaluating the first year of the program and preparing to announce the region's FY2000 grants program. The team is hopeful this year's effort will encourage more proposals during the program's second year.

*Kathy Zeamer, External Affairs,
Hadley, Massachusetts*

Many fear fire as a threat to living communities, an indiscriminate and merciless destructive force. However, fire is often the very bulldozer that helps build homes and enhance neighborhoods—or wildlife.

Last July, Service firefighters burned more than 9,500 acres of degraded savannah grasslands on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge to create winter habitat for endangered whooping cranes. Some 40 fire fighters from six refuges joined forces at the south Texas refuge for seven days to carry out the largest prescribed burn of dense oak shrubs ever on Service lands.

"Really what made this burn a success was the tremendous support and cooperation we got from within the Southwest region and the Service," said Doug Broce, fire management officer for the refuge. "If these firefighters hadn't been able to come down, we'd still be trying to figure out how to catch up on our burn rotation."

Previously, technical support from other fire programs depended on the host refuge's budget. Recent legislation has made support among Interior Department agencies easier to attain and launched prescribed burns into the forefront of the Service fire program.

Fire crews from as far away as Oregon expressed interest in the unique burn and the opportunity for training. Representatives from the Texas Forest Service, Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, National Park Service and the Armand Bayou Nature Center participated in the effort.

"When we placed the call we got a great response—from neighboring Texas refuges to private and state organizations to Service fire personnel from the Pacific region," said Broce. "It helped us do our job in protecting the whoopers and hopefully provided these individuals with some good experience and training."

continued on page 22

Creating Habitat With Fire (continued)



Beneficial fire. *Firefighters burned nearly 10,000 acres at Aransas NWR. FWS photo.*

The result of the team effort and support from various agency fire programs: bringing an imperiled ecosystem a little closer to its natural state and helping the recovery of a flock of whooping cranes looking to survive through another winter.

Through thousands of years of evolutionary change and adaptation, the life cycles of many species on south Texas coastal grasslands have come to depend on fire. In the past 150 years, suppression of naturally occurring fires has imperiled the ecosystem by allowing the encroachment of shrubs, including mesquite and live oak.

Today, visitors to Aransas find reminders of what the grasslands must have looked like 200 years ago. Long stretches of savannah dotted by small groves of oak reach tidal marshes along the Gulf of Mexico. Nearly 400 types of birds spend time on the refuge, along with bobcats, deer and American alligators.

Native grasses and wildflowers support various rodents and reptiles, crucial parts of the ecosystem. Endangered species such as Aplomado falcons are rare yet treasured sights, and the only wild flock of the globally endangered whooping crane winters at the refuge.

To mimic nature's cycles, staff at Aransas NWR have been conducting prescribed burns since the mid 1970s.

"All of south Texas used to burn naturally. Periodic lightening fires maintained the savannah ecosystem by keeping the invasive shrubs in check," said Tom Stehn, the Service's national whooping crane coordinator.

To provide important foraging grounds for the endangered whooping cranes, fire crews burn designated tracts on a regular schedule.

"The whoopers need the oak brush to be less than head high in order to see potential predators. To keep the brush at those shorter heights requires burning a tract every three years," said Stehn.

As a resource management tool, prescribed burning re-establishes fire as an integral part of the ecosystem. It serves multiple purposes, including improving habitat, recycling nutrients and reducing fuels such as dead wood and grasses. Until recently, Aransas NWR conducted prescribed burns only during the winter to benefit cranes. Winter burns keep the oak brush below four feet and provide access to acorns, a crucial supplement to the cranes' diet.

Recent research by refuge biologist Kelley Hays indicates more positive results from summer burns in restoring the grasslands. If conducted during the summer, a time when lightening fires occurred naturally within the ecosystem, a series of burns decreases the number of recurring oak stems allowing for increased growth of native grasses and plants.

*Nancy Brown, Aransas NWR,
Austin, Texas*

Partnership Helps Ensure Future of Native Prairie

A partnership between the Service, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Waterfowl Association ensures a bright (and cost-effective) future for "homegrown" native Minnesota prairie. With the aid of a new seed cleaner, over \$2 million worth of native prairie seed will be processed and used to restore Minnesota prairie.

"We've gotten to a point where we can harvest native prairie seed pretty effectively," said Ron Cole, project leader of the Service's Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge near Odessa, Minnesota. "But even after native seed is harvested you still have the problem of separating the seeds from stems, leaves and other litter before replanting."

But thanks to the Minnesota DNR and the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, the task of cleaning native prairie seed has become much easier.

"We've just constructed a new seed cleaning facility at Big Stone," said Cole. "And, if things go as planned, we'll process over 90,000 pounds of native Minnesota prairie seed this year."

The market value of this cleaned seed—which includes big and little bluestem grass, wild rye grass, prairie coneflower, blazing star, lead plant and other forbs—exceeds \$2 million. Just cleaning the seed commercially would have cost more than \$20,000, Cole said.

Cole began construction of the cleaning facility in the fall of 1998, but he ran out of funding to complete the project.

"The project was stalled until the Minnesota DNR and Minnesota Waterfowl stepped in with additional funding to help us complete the construction of the facility," Cole said. "Thanks to this partnership, we've now got one of the best native seed cleaning facilities in the entire Midwest."

The Big Stone NWR seed cleaner complements existing Service seed cleaning facilities in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and Prairie City, Iowa.

Protecting Russia's Natural Areas

Once the Big Stone seed cleaner became operational in early October, seed harvested from Big Stone NWR, federal waterfowl production areas, state wildlife management areas, state parks, and private land, began arriving by the truckload for processing. After being dried and cleaned, the seed is repackaged and returned to the area of the state where it was harvested for replanting.

While the majority of cleaned seed will be replanted on public land as part of prairie restoration efforts, some seed will also find its way onto private land as part of cooperative agreements between the Service, the Minnesota DNR, nonprofit groups such as the Minnesota Waterfowl Association and Pheasants Forever, and private landowners.

"We generally like to plant a mix of native seed," said Cole, "with both grass and forbs when possible. This combination yields the most benefit to wildlife."

Cole points out the real value of native prairie seed is measured in benefits to wildlife, rather than market value. Thousands of acres of Minnesota prairie will be restored using the seed collected from national wildlife refuges and state land in Minnesota. In turn, this prairie will provide important habitat for dozens of grassland bird and mammal species.

Although pleased with the progress of prairie restorations in Minnesota, Cole remains concerned about the continuing loss of existing native prairie throughout the Midwest.

"We're never going to be able to recreate native prairie once it's been plowed," he said. "Real native prairie might contain over a hundred grass and forb species. We'll plant a half dozen on our prairie restoration projects and be pleased if they all 'take' but our restorations will never be as productive or dynamic as undisturbed native prairie."

*Dan Sobieck, External Affairs,
Fort Snelling, Minnesota*

*Ron Cole, Big Stone NWR,
Odessa, Minnesota*

Excitement crackled through the room as Russian and American natural resource managers at a joint workshop last October realized the potential of working together and began to share their enthusiasm for and commitment to implementing new ideas.

The workshop on Russian Protected Areas culminated as Dr. Janet E. Hohn, assistant regional director for International Affairs in Alaska, and Vsevolod B. Stepanitskiy, chief of the Division of Nature Reserves for the Russian State Committee for Environmental Protection, signed a protocol identifying the importance of developing partnerships for the long-term survival of northern protected areas and their biodiversity.

Planners intended the workshop to foster communication between managers of protected areas of Alaska and the Russian Far East...

Planners intended the workshop to foster communication between managers of protected areas of Alaska and the Russian Far East; explore sustainable support for protected areas; identify elements of a successful "Sister Protected Areas" program; and increase focus on shared species and ecosystems.

Some 100 participants attended presentations by representatives from Russian Protected Areas; the Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, National Forest Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; and international conservation organizations, trade specialists and ecotourism businesses. Panels on subjects ranging from law enforcement to environmental education provided opportunities for managers from both nations to discuss issues and identify solutions.

Region 7 Refuge Supervisor Michael Boylan led a field trip for the Russian delegation to nearby Chugach State Park and the Eagle River Nature Center.

"I found wonder and hope in the expressions of the Russian visitors as they enjoyed Alaska's unique wilderness areas," Boylan said. "I wanted to orient the field trip around practical 'how to' presentations, discussion and exchange of ideas, and I think it worked quite well."

According to Hohn, plans are already in the making for a 2002 workshop.

"If we take the lessons we've learned and apply them over the next few years, we will want to regroup and evaluate the effectiveness of these ideas," she said. "It was really beneficial to us and to the Russian managers to hear about lessons learned by both nations and to share ideas about how to enhance our efforts as conservationists."

*Connie M.J. Barclay, External Affairs,
Anchorage, Alaska*

*Sue Lapkass, Ecological Services,
Anchorage, Alaska*

Deliberate Acts of Outreach

Caught Red-handed and Reported by the National Outreach Coordinator

What's going on with the outreach groups? Who's doing what...and where?

If you don't know where to look for information about outreach, start here! This new column will give you a glimpse into national, regional and programmatic outreach endeavors. We'll let you know the creative, effective and interesting activities produced by Service employees across the country. For the most complete details, visit the Service Intranet site <http://sii.fws.gov/outreach/>.

Here are some highlights from our outreach folks....

■ It's no secret that a clear consistent and concise message is the best way to communicate an idea, and that is just what we're doing! You may have noticed the new Service theme, "U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service—Conserving the Nature of America," popping up all over the place. After sifting through a hundred or so solicited slogans and having them adjusted by advertising and marketing professionals (who contributed their services), it was strongly recommended that we use the word "nature" in our theme because the word has a strong positive identification with the public and encompasses fish, wildlife and plants. Since brevity is key, the theme will almost always appear side-by-side with our agency name...that says it all!

We also agreed with the theme because the Service conserves not only the natural world, but also contributes to the conservation of outdoor traditions, a sense of "place," the environment that supports our economy, and other aspects of our nation—the true nature and heart of America.

"Conserving the Nature of America" can now be found on the handsome new Service exhibits, which come in three sizes—brief case, tabletop, and a large Nomadic style (see photo on page 11), along with the Service Web home page, the new Employee Pocket Guide, and a companion to the exhibits—the new Service brochure. Additional products carrying the theme are in development...be sure you use the theme in your outreach efforts!

If you would like to purchase an exhibit, contact Troy Bunch at NCTC for cost and ordering information at 304/ 876 7656.

■ The **USFWS Employee Pocket Guide...** Get it? Got it? Good! This is the first year for this product and we are very excited about its potential. The guide is designed to assist all employees to better understand the workings of the Service. It is also a **quick and handy reference tool** to help with work-related tasks. For a large text version, go to the Intranet site at <http://sii.fws.gov/outreach/PocketGuide.htm>.

HEY! It's important to let us know what you think about outreach activities. E-mail your comments to anita_noguera@fws.gov. We take feedback seriously!

■ ...Been to the **movies** lately? If you arrived at your seat before the coming attractions, you may have seen one of those nifty slide shows with trivia and local ads. This past year, beautiful **wildlife images filled the screens** inviting movie-goers to explore our natural resources by visiting a national wildlife refuge. Century Media Network, an on-screen advertising company, generously contributed the advertising space and time helped the Service "go Hollywood!"

David Hopkins, a Service employee in California wrote, "I thought it was very *awesome* that when I was getting ready to see the movie Star Wars in Sacramento (with a very packed house) I looked up at the screen and saw five advertisements for our National Wildlife Refuge System. I was very impressed at how nice they looked and I heard many people around me talking about them. I think it's an *awesome* way to get us known. Believe me, the ads were noticed! Thank you for doing such an *awesome* job."

Thank you, David...*awesome* praise indeed! Check out those movie promos at our Intranet site at <http://www.fws.gov/movie/index.html>.

Anita Noguera, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC

Agents Help Thai Park Rangers



Expert advice. *Special Agents Stan Pruszenski (left) and Mark Webb work with Thai national park rangers on an evidence-gathering exercise at a mock poachers' encampment. Photo courtesy of Global Survival Network.*

In August, Service special agents teamed with two conservation organizations and the Royal Forestry Department of Thailand to help launch an ambitious anti-poaching enforcement and outreach program in Khao Yai National Park, Thailand's oldest and most famous protected area.

The program, which was planned and organized by the Global Survival Network and the Wildlife Conservation Society in cooperation with the Thai Forestry Department, got underway with an intensive 12-day training course for park rangers and regional wildlife protection staff. Service Special Agent Mark Webb, who is stationed in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Senior Special Agent Stan Pruszenski of the Office of Law Enforcement's Branch of Training and Inspection helped prepare and teach the core law enforcement segment of the course.

Covering more than 800 square miles in northeastern Thailand, the rainforests of Khao Yai ("Big Mountain") are home to a variety of plant and animal species, including some—such as elephants, tigers and bears—that fetch high prices on the black market.

Partnership Helps Put Fish Back into Isle Royale Waters

In recent years, however, the aromatic aloewood tree, used for perfume and incense, has become the prime target for poachers in Khao Yai. Its price is said to rival that of gold. Recent studies by private conservation groups estimate that as many as 50 aloewood poachers typically operate in the park at any one time.

The new anti-poaching program seeks to curtail both commercial encroachment and illegal subsistence hunting in the park. The August training course focused heavily on the fundamentals of hands-on wildlife law enforcement.

Agents Webb and Pruszenski reviewed such basics as firearms handling and ranger safety and covered techniques for patrolling the perimeter of Khao Yai as well as strategies for locating and arresting poachers in the park. The pair showed the 30-member class how to document and analyze crime scenes and how to gather evidence from poaching camps that would stand up in court. They also discussed ways to collect and analyze intelligence information about poaching activities, and set up field exercises to allow the rangers to practice the investigative skills covered in the classroom.

“International training is one important way that Service law enforcement contributes to global wildlife conservation,” said Kevin Adams, chief of the Office of Law Enforcement. “We’re often the instructor of choice when other countries seek to expand or improve protections for wildlife.”

Sandy Cleva, Office of Law Enforcement, Arlington, Virginia

The first leg of the 13-hour trip began around midnight at Iron River National Fish Hatchery in northern Wisconsin. Workers carefully loaded cargo onto trucks which hurried to rendezvous with a waiting ship in Houghton, on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. The 2,000 pound tanks holding the precious cargo were transferred to the ship, which quietly left the docks in the early morning light.

Six hours later, the cargo arrived at a large, relatively unpopulated island and was transferred to a World War II vintage landing craft which completed the final leg of the journey in just under two hours.

It may sound like a covert military operation but in reality this was the result of a carefully planned partnership between the Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The cargo: 91,000 coaster brook trout fingerlings.

The mission: stock the fingerlings to help restore a depleted population of native coaster brook trout to self-sustaining levels.

The final destination: Siskiwit Bay, Isle Royale National Park, in the upper reaches of Lake Superior.

The project actually began several weeks prior to the stocking date when crews at Iron River hatchery fin-clipped each of the 91,000 fingerlings. In addition, they inserted microscopic wire tags into the snouts of 7,500 fish. The fin clippings and wire tags allow Service biologists to survey fish populations and determine how well the stocking program is working.

And so far, according to Geographic Assistant Regional Director John Christian, it is working—and working well—thanks to the multipartner effort.

“We really could not have made progress without the partnership between Department of the Interior bureaus, state and tribal agencies, and conservation groups such as Trout Unlimited,” Christian said. “No single agency has the resources or jurisdiction to pull this off. It is a real success story that we implemented a true ecosystem approach to protect a valuable aquatic species.”

The coaster brook trout is a rare, anadromous form of brook trout that spends a portion of its life in the nearshore waters of the Great Lakes. Once abundant and widespread in the upper Great Lakes, they are big, colorful, highly sought after sport fish willing to hit flies and live and artificial baits.

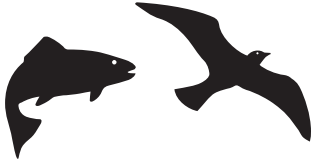
The Service has surveyed Isle Royale coaster brook trout populations since 1993, collecting gametes and bringing them into the federal hatchery system to preserve the genetic material of remnant populations and for development of broodstocks to assist lake-wide rehabilitation efforts.

In addition to the stocking activities, recent fishing regulation changes by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Isle Royale National Park will help protect these fish until they reach reproductive size and age. In 2 to 4 years, stocked fish will be able to reproduce and begin moving the population closer toward the goal of reestablishing a self-sustaining coaster brook trout population in Siskiwit Bay and all of Lake Superior.

Henry Quinlan, Ashland Fishery Resources Office, Ashland, Wisconsin

Chuck Traxler, External Affairs, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota

Ecosystem Approach Initiatives



Washington State Stations Team Up to Restore Chum Habitat

In April 1996, a hundred-year flood receded from the lower Columbia River basin, revealing a horrifying sight. The lower reaches of Hardy Creek—crucial habitat for one of the river's last remaining chum salmon runs—were smothered under a layer of sediment with just four months to go until the salmon, weary from their long migration, would return to their birthplace to spawn and die.

The sediment had smothered the redds that were established the previous winter and biologists estimated that chum production in Hardy Creek from 1995 returns was close to zero. The sediment also covered all existing spawning habitat, making it unavailable for adults returning in 1996. The loss of 2 years' worth of production would have been catastrophic for the Hardy Creek population.

The outlook for the run was grim, and under most circumstances, salvaging the spawning habitat in time for the fall spawning run would have been out of the question. For the staff of the Columbia River Fisheries Program Office, there was just one sliver of hope—the spawning reaches of the creek lay within the boundaries of Pierce National Wildlife Refuge, a 337-acre property along the Columbia River managed as part of the Ridgefield Refuge Complex.

"Once they understood the situation, the refuge staff did everything they could to help us," said fishery biologist Travis Coley. "They contributed money from the flood mitigation funds, heavy machinery, materials and labor. We provided labor and expertise in aquatic species and habitats."

Using photographs of the site, the partners determined the stream's original pool and riffle pattern, and then went in with heavy machinery to excavate the sediment, exposing the crucial gravel substrate once more. The work came down to the wire, wrapping up in October just weeks before the salmon's return in November.

As rains refilled the seasonal streambed with clear, cold water and the chum salmon, blissfully oblivious of their close brush with extirpation, spawned in the creek as they always had, the partners congratulated themselves on their success—and resolved to build on their momentum.

Next, the refuge and fisheries staff restored Hardy Creek's riparian vegetation, degraded after years of grazing from the previous owner's cattle, improving habitat for the fish and for several species of birds. Riparian restoration is a primary management objective for Pierce NWR and has been ongoing since 1985, some with the Columbia River Fisheries Program Office and some with cooperators such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Americorps program.

The fishery biologists began experimenting with structures in the channel to create artificial upwellings, mimicking the seeps and springs that chum salmon prefer for their redds, and installed a weir at the creek's mouth to measure their success. Just three years after the disastrous flood, fishery biologists estimated that 120,000 young salmon began their long migration from the creek to the Pacific, the largest out migration on record.

The Hardy Creek restoration project sets a promising example for cross-program cooperation to achieve holistic management for all native wildlife species. *Fulfilling the Promise*, the long term road map developed for the refuge system, envisions national wildlife refuges as models of ecosystem conservation.

Pierce NWR received praise for its cooperative efforts with the Columbia River fisheries office after the flood of 1996, according to Refuge Manager Jeff Holm.

"We've had a close working relationship with the Columbia River office since the refuge was established," Holm said. "The Oregon State Ecological Services Office and the Little White Salmon National Fish Hatchery have also worked with us to protect and enhance habitat resources in Hardy Creek. We have been doing cross-program work for years based on the logic of sharing expertise, funds and equipment in pursuit of a set of common goals."

Holm singled out Donna Allard of his staff for her crucial role in the 1996 restoration.

Despite a record run in 1998, habitat improvements continue. A second spawning channel, designed to be beyond the influence of the most frequent floods, will soon be completed and will double the amount of spawning habitat available to chum salmon.

"For a while, I thought we were going to have to hold a bake sale to do this project, but the refuge applied for and received \$15,000 through the Challenge Cost Share Program with Burlington Northern-Santa Fe Railroad providing a 2:1 match. Washington Trout pitched in as well," Coley said. "Together, we've transformed a salvage effort to a major habitat restoration project."

*Eric Eckl, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Exploring Our Past



Cabins and Conferences: Celebrating the Murie Conservation Legacy

From 1920 to 1945, Olaus Murie did pioneering work for the Service around the world, including a definitive study on North American elk. His wife, Mardy, accompanied Olaus on his many travels and shared his passion for wildlife and for protecting the remaining American wilderness.

LE Reunions Keep the Past Alive

Retired law enforcement employees who hold their own informal get togethers gathered in Vicksburg, Mississippi, last April for three days of "good times, good stories and good friendship," according to retired agent Jerry Smith.

Some 45 people from 16 states including Florida, New Mexico and Wyoming attended the event, Smith said, and a good time was had by all.

"Some of them can't walk quite as well as they used to, others can't see or hear really well, but you would never notice when they start talking about wildlife law enforcement," said Smith, who helps to organize these yearly reunions. "One and all they still love the job they did for so long: protecting this nation's wildlife."

The group will meet later this year in Las Vegas.

The newest addition to the National Conservation Training Center's conservation museum is an exact replica of the Murie cabin in Moose, Wyoming, long a destination for conservationists from around the world and an important symbol of a defining period in Service history. The cabin, along with a planned Murie Historical Workshop, is the museum's latest tribute to conservation heroes who have helped shape the Service.

Olaus Murie retired from the Service in 1945 and went on to be director and later president of The Wilderness Society. The following year Olaus and Mardy, along with Murie's brother Adolph and his wife Louise, purchased the STS Dude Ranch on the banks of the Snake River in Moose, Wyoming. In 1948 construction was completed and for decades conservationists and scientists from all over the world have visited the Muries' cabin to gain inspiration and wisdom. It became a home for American conservation history and the exact replica is now a fitting addition to the museum at the home of the Service.

After Olaus Murie's death in 1963, the entire ranch was sold to Grand Teton National Park, and in 1998 it was designated a National Historic District. Mardy Murie continues to reside in her cabin on the ranch.

This replica of the cabin is the result of over 1,500 hours of careful work by more than 60 volunteers from Teton Science School and the Jackson, Wyoming, community. Paintings on the walls are replicas and the book titles accurately reflect the Muries' literary tastes. The National Conservation Training Center extends deep gratitude to the Murie Center for the long-term loan of this historical object, one in a growing collection of materials on Olaus, Mardy and Adolph Murie housed at the archives in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

Celebrating the Muries is an ongoing project at the National Conservation Training Center. To commemorate their contributions the training center will host a Murie Historical Workshop July 6-9, 2000, some eighty years after Olaus Murie was first offered a job as a biologist for the Bureau of Biological Survey at the salary of \$1,500 a year.



Little house. This replica of Olaus Murie's cabin is the newest addition to the Service museum. FWS photo.

Workshop planners hope this gathering of conservationists, scientists, educators and others will reexamine the work of federal and private conservationists in understanding and protecting the environment. The first day of the workshop will look historically at the work of the Muries and their ongoing legacy, and the second day will be a workshop for small groups to discuss future conservation efforts and agree on action items for the next millennium of American conservation.

Enrollment information and a complete itinerary will be available in the spring. This gathering, in conjunction with last year's Aldo Leopold Conference and the Rachel Carson Conference in 2001, is part of the ongoing effort to remember and revitalize the legacy of these conservation pioneers and energize the conservationists of the next century.

To learn more about the Muries, visit an online exhibit at <http://www.nctc.fws.gov/history/murie.html>.

Mark Madison, National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Fish & Wildlife Honors...

New England Biologist Receives Gottschalk Partnership Award

Andrew Major, a contaminants biologist with the New England Field Office who collaborated in important studies on the effects of lead on loons, is this year's winner of the Northeast region's prestigious John S. Gottschalk Partnership Award. Each year the award is presented to an individual who has shown outstanding use of partnerships in fish and wildlife resource conservation. In 1994, Major formed the Northeast Loon Study Workgroup, consisting of representatives of state government, academia, non-profit conservation organizations, and private industry, to examine contaminant effects on loons. In 1998, due in large part to the work of the workgroup, the state of New Hampshire passed legislation that will ban the use of most lead fishing sinkers and lures because of the significant mortality that lead tackle is causing to common loons in the Northeast. Shortly after, the state of Maine passed similar legislation.

Region 1 Receives Director's Diversity Award

The Region 1 Diversity and Civil Rights Program received the Director's EEO Award for significant contributions made both regionwide and Servicewide. Those accomplishments included: providing training to all regional project leaders; leading the Service's participation in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities' Third Annual Conference on Natural Resources and Cultural Heritage; and displaying exemplary insights and decision as part of the Regional/National Title VI Civil Rights Review teams, ensuring that State agency programs and facilities were inclusive of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Jerome Butler, chief of the Service's national Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, presented the award to Pacific Regional Director Anne Badgley and ARD for Diversity and Civil Rights Program Dana Perez at a November ceremony.

Transitions... Who's Coming and Going

Two members of the Division of Federal Aid, **Tom Taylor** and **Bob Pacific**, retired on December 31. Taylor began his Service career in 1972 as a planning and hunter education specialist in the Albuquerque regional office, and has been with Federal Aid in Washington, D.C., since 1980, most recently as branch chief for the division's resource management branch. Pacific worked at a number of national wildlife refuges, other field stations and the Region 4 regional office from 1968 until 1990, when he came to Washington, DC. He has been with Federal Aid since 1992.

Joe Webster, geographic assistant regional director for the southern portion of Region 6, has retired. Webster began his Service career in Fisheries immediately, working at national fish hatcheries around the Midwest and west. In 1974, Webster became staff assistant in the Division of Planning and Assistance in the regional office in Minneapolis. He moved to Washington, DC, in 1979 to become chief of the Branch of Budget of the Office of Program Development in Fishery Resources and also served as chief of the Division of National Fish Hatcheries. In 1992, he moved to Denver to become assistant regional director for Fisheries and Federal Aid in Region 6, and later geographic assistant regional director for the four southern states—Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Utah—in the region.

Bill Schaff of the Kirwin NWR in Kansas has been selected as the refuge manager for Innoko NWR in Alaska. Schaff has served on Quivira, Mason Neck, Nisqually and San Luis refuges and in the Division of Law Enforcement. Schaff is currently the Region 6 boating safety coordinator and the Refuge Law Enforcement Health and Fitness Coordinator.

Karen Boylan has been selected as the assistant regional director for External Affairs in Region 7. Boylan joined the EA team in October of 1998 as the legislative liaison and deputy ARD. She has almost four years experience working in the Division of Endangered Species as a biologist and outreach specialist. Boylan joined the Service in 1990 in Delaware.



Who's got the blues?
Fishery biologists from the Oklahoma Fishery Resources Office frequently net blue suckers in the Red River while surveying for other native species such as paddlefish and alligator gar. The blue sucker, a species of special concern, sporadically occurs over much of the Mississippi River drainage. FWS photo.

Fish & Wildlife...In Brief

The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, located in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, recently welcomed its new director, **Ken Garrahan**. Garrahan comes to the Service after serving as director of a municipally owned nature center and demonstration farm in West Hartford, Connecticut.

In memoriam... Longtime Service employee **Arlene Ducret** died December 2 at age 69. Ducret worked for 30 years in the Region 1 regional office as a secretary for many divisions, including fisheries, realty and in later years, public affairs, from which she retired in February 1991. Her husband, Bob, retired from the Service in 1991 as the Regional Land Surveyor and ad-hoc chief surveyor for the region. His father also had been a land surveyor for the Service in 1930s. No services were held, but remembrances may be sent in her memory to the American Cancer Society. The Ducrets also welcome cards and letters at 1044 NE 178th Ave., Portland, OR 97230.

Chief of the Division of Budget **Gary Ceccucci** is going to the Office of Management and Budget, where he will work on policy, program and budget development for Native American programs. The acting budget division chief will be **Steve Guertin**, currently the Service's budget analyst for the Secretary's Office of Policy, Management and Budget.

Scott Johnston was recently named National Ecosystem Coordinator for the Service. In this capacity, Johnston will participate in a review of ecosystem approach implementation to be conducted by a team of deputy assistant directors and deputy regional directors. Johnston, who has been with the Service since 1988, worked in ecological services offices in California and Hawaii before coming to Washington, D.C., in 1997. He currently works in the branch of recovery and delisting in the Division of Endangered Species.

Jerome Butler, chief of the Office for Diversity and Civil Rights, is bound for the Department of Energy, where he will serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Training and Human Resource Development.

A World of Opportunity

Birders World magazine, a full-color, glossy monthly dedicated to "exploring birds in the field and backyard," mentions national wildlife refuges and their importance to birds in nearly every issue and is interested in potential refuge features. In particular, a "Birds on the Move" column steers readers to prime birdwatching locations at given times of year. In the October issue, *Birders World* recommends Salt Plains and Laguna Atascosa refuges, among other locations, for nighttime observation of warblers and thrushes, while the June issue suggested Alaska Maritime, Stillwater and several other refuges as excellent locations to catch north-bound shorebirds. The monthly calendar of events lists International Migratory Birds Day festivals, warbler weekends and other birding occasions. Editor Greg Butcher welcomes your suggestions for refuge features and can be reached by phone (414/796 8776), fax (414/798 6468), or e-mail (mail@birdersworld.com).

Getting Some Ink on Fulfilling the Promise

Director Clark got into the spirit of Keystone again this fall with a series of editorials and letters to the editor in 8 magazines and newsletters published by member organizations of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, also known as the CARE group. Clark used the occasion of National Wildlife Refuge Week to thank these organizations for their support in recent years and tout *Fulfilling the Promise* to their members and readers. Pieces appeared in *National Wildlife* (National Wildlife Federation), *American Hunter* (National Rifle Association), *Ducks Unlimited* (Ducks Unlimited), *Outdoor America* (Izaak Walton League), *Defenders* (Defenders of Wildlife), *Fisheries* (American Fisheries Society), *American Sportfishing* (American Sportfishing Association), and the *Flyer* (National Wildlife Refuge Association). The combined readership of these publications is estimated to exceed 3 million.

Refuges Give Back

In a gracious display of Service loyalty, five Region 2 national wildlife refuges returned significant monetary awards for the sake of a program in which they participated. Last August, managers from the five Refuge Ambassador Program pilot sites in Region 2—Tishomingo, Anahuac, Santa Ana/Lower Rio Grand Valley, Bitter Lake and Havasu—received awards of \$1,000. All five managers and their staffs chose to donate the money back to the Ambassador Program fund because they felt it more important for the program to continue than for their individual stations to be rewarded. Based on the belief that the greatest threat to the refuge system is an uninformed public, the Ambassador Program is a grassroots effort to increase support and awareness of refuges in preparation for the system's 2003 centennial. The program began in 1997 with these five pilot sites and will grow by 10 refuges this year.

The Fish & Wildlife Service and the New Millennium

As I sit down to pen this column, the first one of the new millennium, I find myself thinking about our changing world and what it portends for the future of the Service. Much attention has been given to the Y2K bug but I am much more concerned about open space than I am about cyberspace.

Natural, wild, open spaces are disappearing. I have witnessed it in my own neighborhood in Leesburg, Virginia. Where once there were 50 homes and a country road, now there are multiple housing developments with 350 homes each and a highway through town. Woodcock, bluebirds, grasshopper sparrows... they no longer visit us during the spring and summer months.

Our urban centers are sprawling further and further into the countryside. Consider that by 2050, with the U.S. population expected to increase by 125 million, our nation will have to accommodate the equivalent of 15 additional New York Cities. Demographers also tell us that mid-way through this century, today's minority groups will comprise half of the U.S. population.

The present challenge for the Service is preparing for these realities to come—urban sprawl, population growth and the changing demographics of America.

As to the latter, I acknowledge that the Service has made recent strides in minority recruitment. Yet we need to do better. Interaction with the public is an increasingly important part of all of our jobs. If we are to have relevance within each of America's varied communities, we must have their voice represented at our decision-making table, so that we have an understanding of all points of view.

Our ability to join with as many diverse interests as possible is of the utmost importance given the likelihood that we will have more and more people living closer and closer to the wildlife habitat that is so important to our mission. Cultural diversity will help us do that, as will the expanding grassroots movement to save open space. Communities nationwide are finding innovative ways to protect green space from development. We need to work with these communities to take it further—to reap the economic and aesthetic rewards of fish and wildlife management in their neighborhoods. We already have a start: ranchers are re-introducing the aplomado falcon on their pastures and private property owners are welcoming red-cockaded woodpeckers in their backyards.

Industry is getting in on the act as well. Electric power companies are devising new pole designs, perches and wire guards to reduce bird electrocutions and collisions with power lines. In the Rocky Mountain region, the petroleum industry is participating on our Problem Oil Pits team to identify deadly pools of oil waste that are mistaken for ponds by migrating waterfowl.

But as we reach out to new partners and invite them under the conservation tent, we must not forget our longtime friends. The hunting and angling communities have been supporting our mission since before our agency was even established. Yet as America's landscape becomes more urbanized, young people are growing up disconnected from the farm and the field. We need to find ways to get the younger generations in touch with wildlife, and one of the best ways to do that is to preserve the future of our nation's hunting and fishing traditions.

In the years to come, we must make sure wildlife management is practiced everywhere—in America's industrial parks, city blocks, family farms and ranches, and backyard garden plots, as well as on our refuges, forests, parks, and other public lands. It needs to become the way we do business. Everyone must be a wildlife manager and make careful choices for the spaces we share with Earth's other creatures.



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