



Fish & Wildlife *News*



SPOTLIGHT Celebrating the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program 10

Changing Lives 20 Frog Girl 22 Dan Ashe's First Year 38

Departments

- From the Director / 1**
- News / 2**
- Field Journal / 24**
- Fish Tales / 26**
- Around the Service / 28**
- Our People / 35**

Features



FUCKR / ROGER SMITH

SPOTLIGHT

Celebrating the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program / 10

75 years of wildlife conservation and partnership success

by KIM BETTON



KEITH PHILPOTT

Restore & Enhance / 18

25th anniversary of the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

by MATTHEW FILSINGER and JOE MILMOE



CAREER DISCOVERY INTERN PROGRAM

Life Changing / 20

Career Discovery Intern Program introduces diverse freshmen and sophomores to nature, the Service

by JENNIFER LAPIS



JIM ROBAUGH / USFWS

One Leap / 22

Student makes a difference for her school, community and endangered frogs

by NICOLE OSBORN

CORRECTION: The photo on page 22 of the Winter-Spring edition was not a monarch butterfly but a viceroy butterfly.

ON THE COVER: Dinner is served.
Forster's terns at Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge.

BILL LYNCH / FLICKR / CREATIVE COMMONS
ATTRIBUTION-NONCOMMERCIAL LICENSE




A Conservation Legacy Made to Last

More than ever before, we are faced with conservation challenges that defy traditional ways of doing things. The world is changing too quickly for us to succeed if we do not change with it.

These massive changes are illustrated by looking at Rowan Gould, our Deputy Director, and Taylor Hannah, a newly hired SCEP student.

Rowan and Taylor represent two ends of the Fish and Wildlife Service's employment spectrum. Rowan started his career 36 years ago as a research microbiologist at the Seattle National Research Center. Taylor's first job for the Service is bat conservation work at St. Catherine Creek National Wildlife Refuge with the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC).

Rowan and Taylor are about 40 years apart in age and experience, but that's not the biggest professional difference. When Rowan began his career, 4 billion people were on the planet with 200 million in the United States. As Taylor begins her professional journey, 7 billion people inhabit the Earth, more than 300 million in the United States.

Rowan rode in on an American environmental movement that was less than a decade old. In the 1960s, Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* and a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, led to a new public awareness of human impacts on our fragile ecosystems. The nation created or strengthened numerous environmental laws in the '60s and '70s, including the Endangered Species Act and Clean Water Act; and launched the first Earth Day celebration and the EPA. We carried our activities out through programs working largely independently.

Taylor begins her career at the dawning of an environmental awareness of a different kind. She is faced with the 21st-century reality that the threats to the future of fish, wildlife, habitats and people are now of such magnitude it will take more than laws and the cooperative interaction of Service programs and conservation organizations to turn the situation around. With a 50 percent increase in America's population and a 75 percent increase in the world's population, the competition between people and wildlife for land, water and food has never been greater. Add to that a rapidly changing climate and it is clear that the game has changed.

The Service, too, is changing.

By now you have heard of Strategic Habitat Conservation, the framework upon which our conservation efforts will be built. SHC is a field-based approach for making management decisions about where and how to deliver conservation most efficiently to achieve specific biological outcomes. It requires us to make strategic decisions about our actions, and constantly reassess and improve our approaches.

A practical step in the SHC process is to determine what species we need to save. With almost 1,400 threatened and endangered species nationwide, we can no longer manage individual recovery. But by using a process known as surrogate species selection, we can identify a species as an indicator of landscape habitat and system conditions and redouble our efforts to conserve it. Those efforts should help many other species in that habitat if we have chosen the surrogate species correctly.

Taylor's first job for the Service, working with the Gulf Coastal Plains and Ozarks LCC, is related to SHC. LCCs are the most effective means of working together with partners to provide landscape-scale science that informs conservation of sustainable wildlife populations, as well as land, water and cultural resources.

If Taylor stays with the Service and works as long as Rowan has, there will be 9 billion people on the planet and nearly 450 million in the United States when she celebrates her 36th year of public service. For us to give Taylor and her generation of employees the support and the tools they need, we must be willing to embrace a bold conservation approach that takes into account both present and trending pressures on America's fish and wildlife resources. SHC is that approach.

I won't lie: Change is unsettling. Many of you are concerned about how your job or program will be affected, and certainly we don't know all the answers or even all the questions.

I promise you two things, though: Together, we will find the answers. And together, we will create a new conservation legacy that's made to last. □

Wildlife Without Borders Supports Carbon Sequestration in Sumatra

The forests of Berbak National Park in Sumatra are in trouble. Covering more than 600,000 acres in Indonesia, these forests and peat swamps are home to the critically endangered Sumatran tiger. Along with their fellow forest inhabitants, these carnivores face severe threats from deforestation. From 1990 to 2000, an average of almost 10,000 acres of their forest home were cut down each year.

These tropical forest ecosystems capture and store, or sequester, huge amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. The vegetation and soil in Berbak National Park alone sequester up to 70 million tons of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e) every year—about the annual carbon footprint of 7 million people in the developed world.

A Sumatran tiger made an appearance at the Save Vanishing Species event in September at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park.

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is working to conserve this critical habitat, with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife Without Borders-Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund. The Zoological Society has chosen to create financial incentives that link healthy forests to the emerging carbon market.

The carbon market offers a way for countries or companies to meet emission targets. A country or company with excess carbon emissions can buy credits to cover the extra from a country or company that is below its target.

"What other mechanism can, at present, make forests full of tigers worth more to governments standing up than they are chopped down?" asks Sarah Christie, a Rhinoceros and Tiger Conservation Fund grantee and manager of the Zoological Society of London project in

Berbak. Money raised from carbon credits will be used to address the root causes of deforestation, making this the first self-sustaining national park in Indonesia. Termed the Berbak Carbon Value™ Initiative, this project aims to integrate biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction with generation of CO₂e emission reductions.

So far, the initiative has established an emissions baseline, modeled future deforestation and assessed the future climate benefits of the project. Although much work remains before annual returns from carbon credits are generated, this approach to conservation will improve the futures of the wildlife, people and ecosystems of Berbak National Park.

"Indonesia has the world's third highest carbon emissions. Most of this is due to deforestation, and most of that is due to the burning or draining of peat swamps. Enabling Indonesia to conserve, rather than destroy, this carbon without compromising economic development is a vital step in combating climate change," says Christie. Wildlife Without Borders supports innovative efforts like this that build the will for conservation from the ground, or peat swamp, up. □

KIMMY KRAEER, Division of International Conservation, Headquarters

Canada-U.S.-Mexico Trilateral Committee

Fifty agencies gather to address shared wildlife conservation challenges

Climate change topped the Agenda when the United States played host to this year's gathering of the Trilateral Committee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation and Management in Santa Fe, New Mexico, May 14–18.

The 17th annual gathering brought together experts from the United States, Mexico and Canada to share data and ideas and deepen partnerships.

"Building a strong level of trust between our nations is the most important aspect of the forum," said Herb Raffaele, the chief of the International Conservation Division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "It is only with such trust that meaningful cooperation can ever be achieved."

This year, representatives from U.S. federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations academics, and for the first time, tribal nations, met with senior Mexican officials and managers from five Mexican natural resource agencies and a group of Canadian experts—altogether about 100 people representing 50 agencies and organizations.

Law enforcement officials used the gathering to share training techniques for covert computer investigations and e-commerce.



JOE MILANO / USFWS



CHRIS BARELLA / FLICKR

The threatened ocelot and other imperiled species are the focus of joint conservation efforts between countries.

Participants from all nations in attendance shared their assessments of species vulnerability to forecast global warming trends and discussed how to help them adapt.

NatureServe is working with the Desert LCC, federal and state agencies and other conservation partners in the U.S. and Mexico to conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment of species in protected areas in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts. It will focus on 10 ecosystems and selected plant and animal species in each area, including national wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, national parks, protected areas managed by the BLM and state agencies, and protected areas in Mexico.

The committee participants discussed ways to protect threatened species in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts, as well as in other protected areas that have been established in all three countries.

The migration of birds and other species across the U.S.-Mexico border and plans to reintroduce threatened species into the United States were developed at the meeting. Mexican officials are trying to boost the populations of jaguars and ocelots in Mexican national parks and have been discussing a plan

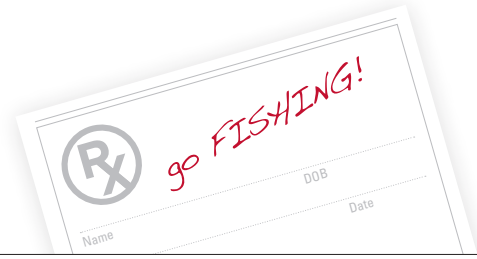
with the Service to try to move some into their former ranges in the southwest. Ocelots once inhabited the entire Gulf Coast but are now extremely rare, with only a handful of sightings confirmed in Texas and Arizona in the past several years. Jaguars, once also plentiful, now only sporadically move north across the border.

Working-level meetings also addressed marine conservation, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and ecosystem conservation.

Participants identified high priorities for collaboration including preventing the spread of diseases across shared borders; sustainable infrastructure design; wind energy development; and continued monitoring and coastal reconstruction efforts stemming from the 2010 Deep Water Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The efforts to work with Mexican officials are particularly important because it has one of the densest concentrations of wildlife on earth, with 10 percent of species known to science. Mexico and the U.S. share 119 species listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Service's Wildlife Without Borders-Mexico program works to improve Mexico's capacity to conserve and manage species, habitats and ecological processes of global importance.

For more information, visit fws.gov/international/DIC/regionalprograms/mexico/mexico.html. □



Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Reels in New Partnerships

Collective oohs and aahs were heard as kids and adults crowded around Thomas Orozco as he tugged on his fishing rod. Dangling at the end of the line was a 24-inch leopard shark. As he hoisted the fish over the railing, help from all sides came to disengage the hook. Thomas stood grinning with his mother and his catch as he posed for photographs, not only for refuge staff, but for most of the families at the beginner's fishing clinic at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in Fremont, California.

The clinic demonstrated a growing partnership between the Don Edwards NWR and local health care providers. For the past year, the refuge staff has been working with a team of pediatricians from Hayward, Santa Clara, and Mountain View, as part of a program developed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center.

Dr. Paul Espinas, a pediatrician at Kaiser Hayward in California, is one of the doctors working with



CARMEN MINICH / USFWS

Thomas Orozco and his mother, Betty Wright, with the leopard shark he caught on the Don Edwards SF Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The shark was later released back into the bay.

Don Edwards NWR. "As our kids spend more time in front of a screen, they are becoming more separated from nature, and it seems are suffering the >>

“I want the kids in our community to lead healthy, happy lives, and I think experiencing nature is a big part of this concept.”

DR. PAUL ESPINAS, a pediatrician at Kaiser Hayward in California

Partnerships, continued from page 3

consequences,” he said. “There is a growing amount of evidence that shows we need to have a strong relationship with nature in order to lead healthy lives.”

In response to that evidence, the Service and the National Environmental Education Foundation collaborated to give health care providers the background and tools to encourage their patients to visit national wildlife refuges. A pilot program was created where health care providers give their patients “prescriptions” to go visit their local refuge.

Recognizing that transportation may be a limiting factor for some to visit, the refuge received a small grant from the Service’s Pacific Southwest Region to host a fishing clinic that provided transportation for patients referred by Doctors Espinas, Vickie Chou and Charles Owyang.

The event was designed to introduce families to fishing and help them understand how people, ecosystems and wildlife are interconnected, while letting people know what the refuge has to offer.

Participants got a brief introduction to the refuge and were handed a tackle box with

hooks, surf leaders and sinkers. Participants learned about safety and ethics, watershed protection, knot tying and rigging. After tying their surf leader onto a fishing rod, they received a bag of bait and were free to try their hand at catching the “big one.”

Plenty of volunteers were on hand to help if needed, and to detangle lines. A large bucket was also available to place any fish caught for temporary observation, and crab traps and shrimp traps were also set.

Of the 43 people who attended the event, only two had ever been to the Don Edwards NWR. Feedback from the families indicated that they will be back for other programs and activities. The refuge will continue to work with the pediatricians, and the staff hopes to expand the partnerships to other local health care providers.

“I want the kids in our community to lead healthy, happy lives,” Espinas said, “and I think experiencing nature is a big part of this concept.”

As for Thomas, he was signed up to return next year for another fishing event as a volunteer. □

CARMEN MINCH, San Francisco Bay NWR Complex, Pacific Southwest Region

The National Wetlands Inventory Partners for Success

The mapping experts at the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) have extended their expertise and support to other national and regional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs, states and other partners. NWI has provided habitat mapping for endangered species (whooping crane migration corridor subject to wind power development), invasive species (Phragmites mapping for Lake Huron coastline in Michigan) and frog habitat identification for Alaska malformation study. NWI data and technical assistance were also provided for a variety of uses, including the Oil Spill Mapper for Natural Resources in the Gulf during the Deepwater Horizon spill, the DOI cloud computing pilot and the Sea Level Affecting Marshes Model.

Assistance to states has included wetlands functional assessments (NWI-Plus) that have been completed for Delaware, and are in progress for New Jersey, Lake Ontario watershed and Wisconsin’s St. Croix watershed.

Recent updates for coastal Georgia will be used by the state for conservation planning, local ordinance development, wetland assessments, regulatory initiatives and restoration.

The EPA and partners are using NWI updated maps along the Wasatch Front and Great Salt Lake to identify waterfowl and shorebird feeding preferences to develop alternate wetlands features in the rapidly expanding urban corridor around Salt Lake City.

Updated refuge wetlands data for the Gulf Coast will be used for Comprehensive Conservation Plans and oil spill remediation. All this, yet the wetlands data layer is only 64 percent complete and 10 percent modernized—just imagine if everyone in the Service had modernized data! □

JO ANN MILLS, Team National Wetlands Inventory Coordinator, Headquarters



The Great Salt Lake framed by the Wasatch Front.

BRETT BILLINGS / USFWS

The Freedom of Information Act

What you need to know

FOIA—yet another acronym to add to the litany of those we encounter on a daily basis in our work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As most of us know, these four letters are short for the Freedom of Information Act. But as much as we come across it or employ it, what does FOIA really stand for?

For those of us loathe to the idea of hearing about record management and searching through our files, FOIA might stand for Forgotten or Inadequately Archived. Or perhaps we are more guarded about the information we manage and aren't keen on our work being broadly distributed and FOIA represents Fear of Inquiring Adversaries.

Changing with the Times

Regardless of our personal association with FOIA, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA; 5 U.S.C. § 552) and subsequent regulation (43 CFR Part 2), policy, guidance and judicial decisions collectively make requirements clear. The emphasis is on open public access to records of the executive branch of the government. Signed into law in 1966, fittingly on the Fourth of July, the Act was notably amended to bring it into the information age in 1996 and again in 2007 to further emphasize openness in government.

This openness was reinforced in 2009 as President Obama, on his first day in office, signed a memorandum providing the



WENDY BUKLIS

Public access to agency records contributes to the trust relationship necessary to sustain conservation efforts. Here, salmon dry for a family's subsistence use along the Yukon River in Western Alaska.

“*The Freedom of Information Act reflects our nation's fundamental commitment to open government.*” ATTORNEY GENERAL HOLDER, March 19, 2009

Administration's FOIA policy direction. The specifics of the Administration's policy were provided two months later by Attorney General Eric Holder. As a result, how we are to implement the FOIA has been made clear: The statute's emphasis is disclosure; and even where exemptions may apply—consider discretionary releases.

FOIA & FWS

The current statute, regulations, associated policies and guidance can be found at a Department of the Interior website <doi.gov/foia>. The nine criteria for withholding records under the FOIA are called exemptions. So how do we relate the FOIA exemptions and related guidance

to records responsive to a request? We ask whether withholding any of the records, in whole or in part, is required or necessary. We also need to realize that FOIA doesn't exist in a vacuum. Other statutes and regulations bear on what can be divulged (Exemption 3). Our goal then is a release of records, and portions of records, to the extent allowed while not violating mandated protections.

Summarizing the exemptions

Exemptions 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are particularly pertinent to our work here at the Service. Exemption 2 addresses internal agency personnel rules and practices. Interpretation of what this entails has been in flux, but most

recently has been narrowed to its original focus on routine matters. Financial and proprietary information is protected by Exemption 4, particularly relevant to contract administration.

Deliberative processes within the agency, attorney work products and attorney-client privilege are protected by Exemption 5, with the intent that in serving the public interest there needs to be provision for due process. Exemption 6, an area of convergence with the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a), protects against invasion of personal privacy, including agency employee personnel files. Certain aspects of law enforcement records are protected by Exemption 7.

It should be noted that FOIA applies to all agency records while the Privacy Act applies to records that are a subgroup of agency records contained in a Privacy Act system and that are arranged and generally retrieved by a unique personal identifier. FOIA's emphasis is on disclosure of records while the Privacy Act's emphasis is on protecting records—absent a compelling public interest or a request from the individual to whom the records pertain. There are necessary and required checks and balances between the two laws and what may be released. >>

DOI regulations define **agency record** for purposes of FOIA as “any documentary material which is either created or obtained by an agency in the transaction of agency business and under agency control.”

Freedom, continued from page 5.

Where do we go from here?

In addition to the policy aspects of the current emphasis, there is the practical matter of managing the response process in the face of a large and generally increasing number of requests. The website <foia.gov> provides additional statistics associated with FOIA processing.

We can do our part by first considering whether what a prospective requester is seeking is already available through agency electronic reading rooms and other resources. An initial contact with the relevant program office or FOIA professional can

help to determine if a formal FOIA request is even necessary.

Now that we know a bit about the history and renewed direction of the Act and its exemptions, we can use its unambiguous guidelines to our advantage through improved record retention and management on the one hand, and a more inclusive perspective of the context in which we work, on the other. This can perhaps lead us to a new way of interpreting the FOIA acronym—Friends of Information Access. □

LARRY BUKLIS, Pacific and Pacific Southwest Regional FOIA Coordinator

Conserving the Future Implementation Powers Forward

If you followed the 18-month development of *Conserving the Future*—the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s vision to guide the National Wildlife Refuge System for the next decade—you saw a level of transparency rare in government. That transparency is again apparent as nine implementation teams work to make the vision a reality.

The *Conserving the Future* vision and its 24 recommendations are online at <AmericasWildlife.org/vision>, where you can also find the guiding implementation plan, finalized on January 20 by the Executive Implementation Council, led by Refuge System Chief Jim Kurth. The plan includes a timeline for implementation and guidance on communications and progress reporting, among other facets of implementation. Quarterly progress reports will be posted online. Implementation is expected to be largely complete in about five years.

The *Conserving the Future* vision acknowledges the broad social, political and economic changes that have made habitat conservation more challenging in recent years. It points to a nation that has grown larger and more culturally and ethnically diverse, with less undeveloped land, more invasive species, and one facing the impacts of a changing climate.



The nine implementation teams—composed of Service employees—work in: strategic growth; urban wildlife refuge initiative; leadership; planning; scientific excellence; community partnerships; hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation; interpretation and education; and communications. Each team will reach out to other Service employees, Refuge Friends organizations, partners and subject matter experts as they develop policies and action plans.

Employees and partners can voice their suggestions for implementation by writing to <conservingthefuture@fws.gov>. Employees can get extra implementation information on the Intranet, <https://inside.fws.gov>, which will also carry the information posted at <AmericasWildlife.org/vision>. □

Targeting Success



Students from Battle Ground, Washington’s “Futures Program” learn how to shoot a compound bow as well as the conservation benefits of the Wildlife and Sports Fish Restoration Program at an April event held to mark the program’s 75th anniversary.

There Is Life After Retirement

AKA The Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees

Yes, there is life after retirement and many of us are so busy we wonder how we ever had time to work for a living. But we really enjoy being members of the Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees. It keeps us in the loop with former and current folks of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and offers us fulfilling opportunities to stay involved in conservation. It's great to feel that we are still part of such a splendid organization without having to answer to a clock or a boss.

Ours is a membership organization of retired employees and those planning retirement in the near future. We recognize and strive to document the rich heritage of the Service and its employees, find and preserve historical treasures and information that illustrate the Service's invaluable contribution to our natural world, and, in so doing, involve both present and past employees. This process begins at home with our members. Many items accumulated during our careers have been donated to the Service archives and museum. Others have been uncovered through research and our many career contacts. Our ultimate goal is to educate the public as well as newer Service employees about the proud history and great work of the Service in their behalf.

Oh, yes, we also make a concerted effort to have a lot of fun.



The 2012 get-together was in Charleston, South Carolina.

Our association helps retired employees stay in touch, and can assist in locating former colleagues. We promote periodic reunions of retirees to renew past friendships and to develop new ones. These reunions also include informative workshops and tours that provide a wealth of information on topics of importance to retired employees as well as on current conservation issues and happenings.

An important aspect of the social reunions is to connect current Service employees with their retired colleagues and the experience they have to offer. We rotate reunions around the country to encourage retirees unable to travel long distances to participate when they are held in their region.

“ Oh, yes, we also make a concerted effort to have a lot of fun.”

Our first reunion drew 13 retirees and four spouses, but most of those attending became the driving force in developing our association. More recent reunions, such as Kennebunkport, Maine (2009), and San Diego, California (2011), have drawn 200 or more with active attendance by local, regional and headquarters staff. Our 2012 get-together was in Charleston, South Carolina.

Who is a “retiree”? The association counts as a retiree any person who worked for the Service and has now retired,

including their spouses. Further, some of our colleagues were caught up in reorganizations, retired from other agencies, or have taken on second careers, but still consider themselves Service people. Among these are colleagues that were formerly in Research, Animal Damage Control or certain national fish hatcheries transferred to state operation. Our current membership level is more than 2,500. By asking the retirees to work closely with current employees at various events and conferences, we have kept our past alive in a very real sense. Our artifact and museum collection would be much the poorer without retirees to find objects (sometimes in their own basements or attics), to identify memorabilia, and, most importantly, to explain how these things were used.

The affairs of the association are guided by a Board of Directors composed of nine members, one of whom is elected by fellow board members to serve as the presiding officer, as president. The board selects a vice president, secretary, treasurer and scribe.

We invite you to visit our website at <FWSRetirees.org> and check us out. Our latest newsletter is always available using the link provided at Latest Retiree General Newsletter on the Home Page. Feel free to contact any of the current board members (listed on the site) or Service Historian Dr. Mark Madison at NCTC for more information. □

STEVE RIDEOUT, JIM MCKEVITT and JUDY PULLIAM, Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees



STEVE GIFFORD

The short-eared owl, species number

31 for the count, hunts

rodents during the day in the grasslands at Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge.

Website Helps You Find Refuge Trails



Whether you want to hike on a national wildlife refuge near your home or find birding trails and boardwalks when you travel, the new refuge trail finder is just what you need. The trails website <fws.gov/refuges/trails/index.cfm> enables visitors to search for hiking trails by state, trail name or refuge. Details about each trail include length, grade, slope and special features such as an observation deck, boardwalk or designation as a National Recreation or National Historic Trail.

The site also features stories about new trails or additions to trails, such as the Animal Olympics added to the Magnolia National Recreation Trail by the Friends of St. Catherine Creek Refuge in Mississippi.

Two newly designated National Recreation Trails are included on the site—the Froland Waterfowl Production Area Interpretive Trail, winding for 1.7 miles through the prairie potholes of the Morris Wetland management District in Minnesota, and Sandtown Nature Trail on Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma.

The new Refuge Trails Website is at <fws.gov/refuges/trails>.

Oakland City Christmas Bird Count Has One of Best Counts in Indiana

“Toot, toot, toot,” the rhythmic call of the Northern saw-whet owl played from the speakers through the dark of night carrying the sound deep into the mixed evergreen and hardwood forest. Nearby, four bundled observers stood watch, hoping to hear a response from one of these rare nocturnal owls. Although it was only 4:30 in the morning, it was just the beginning of the day for these dedicated bird watchers and the 15 other observers who participated in the Oakland City (Indiana) Christmas Bird Count on December 31, 2011.

The Northern saw-whet owl was not added to the list that morning, but 100 other bird species—61,561 individual birds—were tallied throughout the day. This was only the fourth count circle in Indiana to ever amass 100 or more bird species during the winter Christmas Bird Count season.

The Oakland City Count was one of about 2,000 Christmas Bird Counts conducted throughout the country from mid-December through early January. All counts are coordinated by the National Audubon Society with the emphasis on obtaining valuable bird population data. The goal of an individual Christmas Bird Count is to document all the bird species seen (or heard) within an established 15-mile diameter count circle.

Participants in the Oakland City Count were divided into 6 teams to cover the count area, which included much of the Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge,

Indiana Department of Natural Resources Sugar Ridge Fish and Wildlife Area, and thousands of acres of grasslands. Each team paired veteran bird watchers with those newer to bird watching.

Bird watchers knew they had a great count going with 88 species tallied by lunchtime including rarities like barn owl, merlin, greater white-fronted goose and purple finch. The participants knew that 100 species, the number that would give the Oakland City Count one of the best counts in all of Indiana, was attainable.

A plan of attack was formulated for the afternoon. One group would hit the towering pine forest in the central part of the count circle in an attempt to see the red-breasted nuthatch that was certainly flitting among the pine cones, while another group of counters acted on a tip from a local sportsman that a covey of at least 15 northern bobwhite quail were regularly grouping in a fence row on the northwestern edge of the count circle.

By 6 p.m. species lists were pouring into the count compiler, who tallies all of the results and submits the final data to the National Audubon Society as well as the Indiana Audubon Society. Each team’s list brought a few more species to the count total that was inching closer to 100.

One team called in its species list, which added numbers 97 (snow goose) and 98 (horned grebe); while a special trip through open habitat brought home number 99 (lapland longspur) from yet another dedicated counter. And there the count remained, at 99 total species, with only one group of counters yet to report.

The next morning, the missing list was submitted and while there were plenty of great species on it, all had been seen at least by one other party...except for one. There it was, number 100, the elusive pine warbler, spied for about two seconds by the observers, but long enough to identify it and bring the count to 100 species!

The count total proves how valuable the habitat of southwestern Indiana is for a wide diversity of bird species. In addition, the data provide further evidence that the habitat restoration and conservation efforts undertaken by organizations like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are providing fruitful results. Continued improvements could prove that southwestern Indiana is a birding mecca of the Midwest. □

HEATH HAMILTON, Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge and Management Area, Midwest Region

Home Values Higher near National Wildlife Refuges, Study Finds

A peer-reviewed national study, released in late May by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, shows that in urban areas across three regions of the country owning a home near a national wildlife refuge increases home value and helps support the surrounding community's tax base.

According to the study, conducted for the Service by economic researchers at North Carolina State University, homes located within half a mile of a refuge and within eight miles of an urban center were found to have higher home values of roughly:

- 7–9 percent in the Southeast;
- 4–5 percent in the Northeast; and
- 3–6 percent in the California/Nevada region.

Researchers based their findings on 2000 U.S. Census Bureau micro-level data. The report is the first national study to analyze

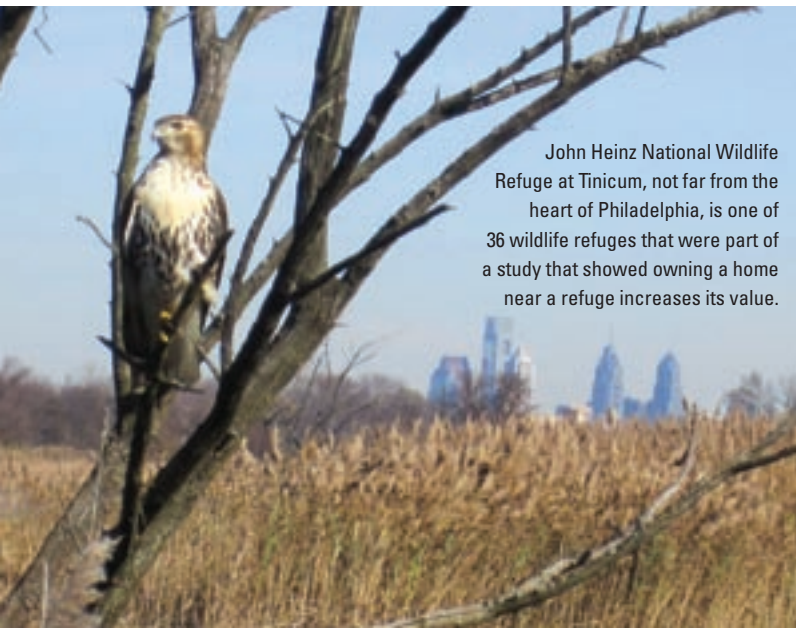
national wildlife refuges' impact on land values.

Calculated in 2000 dollars, the 14 refuges in the Southeast examined in the study added \$122 million to local property values. The 11 refuges studied in the Northeast added \$95 million. The 11 refuges studied in California/Nevada added \$83 million.

The researchers surmised that refuges boost property values in the selected regions because refuges protect against future development while preserving scenic vistas and other "natural amenity benefits associated with open spaces."

Researchers did not include data from the Midwest, Southwest, Central Mountains and Northwest, where refuges tend to be located further from urban centers than in the Northeast, Southeast and California/Nevada region.

The report is available here: fws.gov/refuges/about. □



John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, not far from the heart of Philadelphia, is one of 36 wildlife refuges that were part of a study that showed owning a home near a refuge increases its value.

USFWS



"This was the best Visitor Center I can recall seeing in a very long time," said a survey comment from a visitor to Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma.

National Wildlife Refuges Earn High Marks with Visitors

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is doing many things right on its national wildlife refuges, according to a large percentage of surveyed visitors to national wildlife refuges in 2010 and 2011. Some 90 percent of respondents gave consistent high marks to all facets of their refuge experience.

The peer-reviewed survey, commissioned by the Service and designed, conducted and analyzed by researchers with the U.S. Geological Survey, evaluated responses from more than 10,000 adult visitors surveyed at 53 of the country's 556 national wildlife refuges between July 2010 and November 2011.

More than 45 million people visited national wildlife refuges in 2011.

Of survey participants,

- 91 percent reported satisfaction with recreational activities and opportunities;
- 89 percent reported satisfaction with information and education about the refuge;

■ 91 percent reported satisfaction with services provided by refuge employees or volunteers; and

■ 91 percent reported satisfaction with the refuge's job of conserving fish, wildlife and their habitats.

Some survey participants also volunteered enthusiastic comments, such as this one: "Refuges make me aware that I am a part of the American experience and not just an observer. Nowhere else do I feel such a deep sense of connection with the land, the plants, and the wildlife. Visiting a refuge is truly a spiritual experience."

Among the most popular refuge activities visitors reported were wildlife observation, bird watching, photography, hiking and auto-tour-route driving. Most visitors also reported viewing refuge exhibits, asking information of staff or volunteers and visiting a refuge gift shop or bookstore.

Findings from a second phase of the survey, covering another 25 refuges, are expected in 2013. The Service will use survey results to help guide refuge transportation, facilities and services planning. The survey is available here: pubs.usgs.gov/ds/685. □

DERIK PINSONNEAULT / USFWS

The Elements of Success / 14

Linking conservation with recreation

by AMANDA FORTIN

Of Moose and Men / 16

Learning in Alaska by studying tame moose

by RILEY WOODFORD

Gone Fishing / 18

Restoring Wisconsin's Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery

by DAVID PEDERSON

Celebrating the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program

|| by KIM BETTON

75 Years of Wildlife Conservation and Partnership Success



The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration

Program (WSFR) is celebrating its 75th anniversary and a new era in wildlife conservation. The Service is proud to join the hunting, fishing and boating industries, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, state partners, non-government agencies and friends to support the momentous occasion.

Natural lakes and wetlands are abundant in regions like this meadow in Erie National Wildlife Refuge in northwest Pennsylvania



Since 1937, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has distributed more than \$14 billion to state fish and wildlife agencies for on-the-ground conservation through WSFR.

The anniversary, called “WSFR 75 — It’s Your Nature” embraces new goals for fostering and maintaining partnerships to continue conservation and outdoor recreation for the next 75 years and beyond. WSFR made the official announcement during its kick-off news conference at the 2012 Shot Show in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Throughout this year, WSFR and its partners will participate in various events and programs to help spark awareness about the importance of wildlife.

“This anniversary celebrates one of the most significant and successful partnerships in fish and wildlife conservation in American history,” said Hannibal Bolton, Assistant Director for the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. “WSFR plays an important role in conservation, supplies jobs for many Americans, and benefits local economies through boating, fishing, hunting and shooting activities,” Bolton said.

A survey published in 2006 showed that 87.5 million Americans enjoyed some form of wildlife-related recreation and spent more than \$122 billion pursuing their activities. That study, the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, is being updated now.

And that dollar figure underestimates their overall value to the economy. Hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation contribute an estimated \$730 billion to the U.S. economy each year, according to another recent study.

Recreation in national parks, refuges, and other public lands alone led to nearly \$55 billion in economic contribution and 440,000 jobs in 2009, that study showed.

“The 75th anniversary of the WSFR program is a tremendous opportunity to celebrate the conservation victories that have been made possible because of this innovative funding approach,” said Dr. Jonathan Gassett, president of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. “WSFR has made the difference for the survival and abundance of some species, and because of it, many fish and wildlife populations are at historically high levels today.”

WSFR’s success starts with the outdoors industry and the excise taxes paid on certain hunting and fishing equipment items and also through fuel taxes.

That tax money, often with matches from states and WSFR’s other generous partners, is then returned to the states, which use it to enhance wildlife recreation and hunting and fishing opportunities. This in turn benefits the hunting and fishing public as well as the industries that pay the taxes.

No other single conservation effort in the United States can claim a greater contribution to fish and wildlife conservation than the excise tax-funded portion of WSFR.

In addition to industry and agency partnerships, WSFR would not be what it is today if it were not for its pioneers who built this foundation for conservation in America.

In the early 1900s when our nation was reeling from economic hardships, Sen. Key Pittman from Nevada and Congressman A. Willis Robertson co-sponsored the Pittman-Robertson bill for wildlife restoration.

The unprecedented law carved a path for a stable, secure program of wildlife conservation by diverting an excise tax on sporting guns and ammunition to fund wildlife restoration. And on September 2, 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the “Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act”—now known as the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act. The act fostered partnerships between federal and state fish and wildlife agencies, the sporting arms industry, conservation groups, and sportsmen and women to benefit wildlife.

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, now the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, is also a vital part of our nation’s conservation efforts.

“We are grateful to our founding forefathers and all supporters through the years,” said Bolton. “WSFR is, at its core, the national model for conservation in the United States. It is our obligation to future generations to make certain that WSFR continues to deliver those conservation results over the next 75 years.” □

KIM BETTON, Office of Public Affairs, Headquarters

 **For more information**

follow visit

WSFR program
<wsfrprograms.fws.gov>

75th Anniversary
<wsfr75.com>

 **facebook.com/WSFR75**

 **twitter.com/wsfr75**

The Elements of Success

How WSFR funds helped create Summer Lake Wildlife Area

by AMANDA FORTIN

In the northwestern corner of the Great Basin, about 100 miles from Bend, Oregon, is a haven for wildlife and wildlife enthusiasts alike. Summer Lake Wildlife Area was the first wetland-focused wildlife area established by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and, thanks to funds from the Wildlife and Sport Fishing Restoration program, these nearly 19,000 acres play a role in the conservation of hundreds of species and the recreation of thousands of visitors each year.



A sunset on Summer Lake

The Lodge at Summer Lake is a place of R&R for many visitors to the Summer Lake Wildlife Area.

“It is a remarkable wildlife area in a remarkable setting,” says Martin St. Louis, the state wildlife manager at Summer Lake. “Our management revolves around native plants and trying to mimic what was here naturally; this makes it an especially attractive place for birds and game animals which makes it attractive to birders and hunters.”

Today, the Summer Lake Wildlife Area is home to more than 40 mammal species, at least 280 species of birds, 15 reptile and amphibian species, and eight fish species. Large nesting populations of waterfowl including Canada geese, gadwalls and American coots can be seen there, as well as trumpeter swans and snow geese that stop during their spring and fall migrations.

While conserving wetland habitat, Summer Lake Wildlife Area provides public recreation such as fishing, bird watching, wildlife photography, hunting and camping. Open year-round, its facilities include well-maintained access roads and parking area, restrooms, picnic areas, nature trails, a canoe launch, camp sites and interpretive signs. Approximately 7,500 people visit the area each year.

Many of those visitors stop into the Lodge at Summer Lake, a privately owned bed and breakfast near the wildlife area. “People come here from big cities for R&R,” said Jan Froust, owner of the Lodge. “There are also a lot of unique things about the geographical area here. From wetlands and desert to forest and the lake, there is so much to love about this place.”



Great egrets are just one of the 280 species of birds that can be found at the Summer Lake Wildlife Area.

ODFW

Along with unique geographical features, Summer Lake also has a special place in history: John C. Fremont, one of Lincoln's major generals early in the Civil War, came across the cliffs above Summer Lake in the winter of 1843 and gave it its name. "It was a cold, clear day and he was standing in deep snow up on that rim," Froust said, recalling the area's history. "He looked down and saw a sunlit valley with a smooth lake and no snow. It looked like summer to him so he called it 'Summer Lake.'"

Creating Summer Lake Wildlife Area

Over the course of several decades, multiple elements came together to create the wildlife area at Summer Lake. The first of those elements was put into place with the passing of the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937.

Also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, this act was crucial to the creation of the Summer Lake Wildlife Area in 1944. "Without money from Pittman-Robertson, the land never would have been acquired," said Dan Edwards, wildlife branch chief for the WSFR program in the Service's Pacific Region. "The state would have had a hard time getting the space."

"Originally, the wildlife area included only about 2,500 acres of wetlands north of Summer Lake," said St. Louis. "Even though it wasn't a huge space, the Summer Lake wetlands were an important stopover for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds traveling along the Pacific Flyway."

With the first acquisition complete, the next element for success was growth. Over the years, the area has expanded as additional land was acquired by purchase, inter-governmental agreement and private easements. The last two large purchases were in 1963, when the refuge purchased the 2,545-acre Williams Ranch expanding the north and east boundaries of the wildlife area, and 1971, when the 1,404-acre River Ranch tract was acquired.

Today, the wildlife area extends over 18,941 acres of Oregon's high desert range land, meadows, wetlands and marshes. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife owns 12,818 acres of the area's land and 5,124 acres are owned by the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies. The entire wildlife area is managed the state fish and wildlife agency. An additional 999 acres of private land are covered by easement agreements.

Maintaining SLWA for wildlife and wildlife lovers

The Pittman-Robertson Act authorizes the Service to cooperate with the states to fund wildlife restoration projects. "Each state determines which projects are eligible," said Edwards. "These projects may include restoration, conservation, management and enhancement of wildlife and their habitats for the enjoyment of the public."

During the past five years, funding for the operation and maintenance of the Summer Lake Wildlife Area has averaged approximately \$250,000 annually.

This funding is the final element to the success of the Summer Lake Wildlife Area. All developmental, management and maintenance projects accomplished at the wildlife area have been a result of funding through WSFR.

"Everything that has been done at Summer Lake Wildlife Area and probably everything that will be done at Summer Lake Wildlife Area is the result of this funding," said St. Louis. "The Pittman-Robertson fund will continue to support all wetland restoration, management and enhancement and maintenance activities to ensure that this place continues to be a success."

The success of Summer Lake Wildlife Area can be measured in many ways: From the increased number of waterfowl nesting each year to the thousands of acres acquired for recreation, the impact of this area has been far-reaching.

Yet not all successes are quantifiable. "We go there to feel refreshed, have more energy, and to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the lodge," Foust said. "It is so quiet you can actually hear the beating of bird wings above you." □

BY AMANDA FORTIN, External Affairs, Pacific Region

OF Moose & Men



JIM DAU/ADF&G

Alaska's
Kenai Moose
Research
Center
studies tame
moose with
WSFR funds

by RILEY WOODFORD



Moose are popular with photographers and wildlife watchers, and Alaska's official land mammal is pursued by thousands of hunters every year. About 7,000 moose are harvested annually, providing more than 3 million pounds of wild, organic meat.

Knowing what makes a moose healthy, and understanding what it takes to maintain healthy moose populations is important to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game—and to wildlife managers in moose country across the North. But a full-grown, three-quarter-ton moose can be a dangerous animal to study. A moose kick can kill a wolf, and more than one person has been on the receiving end of such a deadly blow.

It's tough for a biologist to dog the heels of a foraging wild moose to watch exactly how it eats, or to closely monitor the pregnancy of a cow moose. But tame moose don't object to human company. By bottle raising moose and conditioning them to human contact, biologists at the Kenai Moose Research Center have cultivated cooperative subjects to study.

"This facility has so much to offer," said biologist Stacy Crouse, who worked at the

center for 13 years. "There are things you can do here that you can't do in the wild, and plenty of things you can test out and apply to the wild."

Stacy Crouse and husband John met while working at the center; and John now serves as the director. As scientists and caretakers their duties have ranged from performing ultrasound examinations and drawing blood to fixing fences and hazing bears.

The facility is tucked into the rolling hill and lake country of the northwestern Kenai Peninsula on land that is part of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The center is home to about 20 moose. More than 15 miles of 8-foot-tall woven wire wildlife fencing encloses four tracts, each a square-mile, with a landscape of trees, meadows and small lakes. In a ranch-like setting, the lab and research facilities, bunkhouse and caretaker's cabin are

surrounded by rolls of fencing material, building supplies and farming paraphernalia.

Over the years, moose researchers from Norway, Sweden, Russia, Japan, Canada and other American states have worked on projects at the center. Many of the studies at the center are long term, because scientists are able to work with the same animals for years, an opportunity rarely available in the wild.

“If you don't have bottle-raised animals you really can't do these kinds of studies, [wild moose] just growl at you.”

Stacy Crouse, biologist

Right: Tom Lohuis, former director of the research center, feeds a moose.

Left: Biologist Stacy Crouse with a collared moose.

“Initially they trapped wild moose in the pens,” John Crouse said. “They first measured all the vegetation in the pens, and then they trapped moose in the pens and studied the impact on the vegetation. At one point they had 40 moose in one of the pens over winter. They were getting a sense for how much vegetation was required to sustain a moose—not only how much but also the nutritional content of the forage.”

In the wild, a bull moose may live about 13 years, a cow moose about 17 years. Scores of different moose have lived at the center over the past four decades, many hand raised by John and Stacy Crouse and other staff.

“We are still hand raising moose as we need them. We are not a receptacle for orphaned animals,” John Crouse said. “Every two or three years we raise a group of animals so we have several cohorts available to study.”

“Most of the moose are tractable,” John Crouse said. “The hand-raised animals will put up with us standing next to them watching. We are able to sample blood, feces and urine, recording what and how much they're eating. We can collect urine samples directly, get them on a scale and weigh them, and do an ultrasound exam—all without having to sedate them. There are no drugs involved; we're just walking around with them. For weights we lead them down to the scale, they get up on the scale and we get a weight measurement.”

“The only way to really find what a moose is eating is to watch a moose eat,” Stacy Crouse said. “You can go in after the fact and measure bite size and get ideas about what part of the plant they're exploiting. That's why we've put so much effort over the past few years to raise these calves, to have a moose that's tractable and will stand next to you like a dog, but will forage like a wild moose.”

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has collaborated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies, as well as graduate students doing doctoral and masters' work. Currently all research is done by state biologists, and the work has direct applications to moose management in Alaska.

“The bulk of our funding is through Pittman-Robertson funds,” John Crouse said. “It funds research to develop techniques and understand relationships

that help us manage wild moose populations.”

One project at the center has implications for moose researchers around the globe—improving understanding of the data collected by the new GPS and VHF devices used to track and study wild moose. These devices, usually attached to collars, are used to study animals ranging from wolverines and bears to moose and mountain goats. Early devices enabled researchers to simply locate animals, now



devices can record, store and even transmit a wide range of data. The tame and observable moose in the large pens are perfect test subjects.

“We can put these out and correlate the behaviors to the data the collars are collecting,” John Crouse said. “If activity measures are different enough, eventually we may be able to say whether they're nibbling on low bush cranberries or stripping willows, rather than just determining whether animals are actively foraging or not.”

“There's been a lot of good people come through the facility,” John Crouse said. “The Moose Research Center was given the Group Achievement Award by The Wildlife Society in 1992 for outstanding achievements benefiting wildlife.” □

RILEY WOODFORD, Alaska Department of Fish and Game



G N E

*Fish restoration
funds help restore
Wisconsin's Wild Rose
State Fish Hatchery*

by DAVID PEDERSON

Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery is critical to Wisconsin's \$2.75 billion sport fishery. It produces for stocking statewide 27 percent of trout and salmon, 64 percent of northern pike and most of the lake sturgeon and spotted musky. This hatchery is particularly important to Lake Michigan fishing because more than 94 percent of fish raised at Wild Rose are stocked there.

Wild Rose has been a workhorse for Wisconsin's fish propagation system since the state bought it in 1908. But the century-old hatchery's ability to continue meeting that stocking demand was threatened by aging facilities and water supply problems. Fish production was decreasing and the hatchery violated environmental laws written after the facility was built. Plans were developed to renovate the hatchery in phases. What was needed was a facility to meet the needs of the 21st century—needs that recognize the genetic diversity of fish populations and cope with emerging disease issues like viral hemorrhagic septicemia. Essentially

two facilities would be built—a cold water hatchery for trout and salmon and a cool water hatchery for northern pike, spotted musky, walleye and lake sturgeon.

With renovations and enhancements paid for, in part by WSFR dollars, Wild Rose is now a state-of-the-art hatchery facility with greater efficiency and flexibility, and increased environmental protection. The hatchery will produce healthier fish, and will be able to increase production of trout and salmon by about 15 percent and will be able to nearly double its production of northern pike, spotted musky, lake sturgeon and walleye.



The Wild Rose visitors center offers many learning opportunities.



Phase 1 of the renovation, to build the cold water hatchery, began in the summer of 2006 at a construction price tag of \$15.9 million. This phase was paid for by Sport Fish Restoration funds, money from environmental restoration agreements reached with paper companies on the Fox River and anglers' license dollars. Included in this part of the renovation was construction of a cold water nursery building for egg incubation and early rearing, a broodstock building, four covered production raceway buildings, and new water supply, distribution and reuse systems that bring the water supply into compliance, and a new consolidated, state-of-the-art fish rearing wastewater treatment system to meet or exceed current discharge standards. A visitors center was also built. The first fish were moved into the raceways in the spring of 2008.

Construction of Phase 2, the cool water portion of the hatchery, began in June 2008 at a construction cost of \$17.7 million and was completed in 2009, allowing for cool water fish production the spring of 2010. Sport Fish Restoration funds and anglers' license dollars paid for this part of the

renovation. The major goals for Phase 2 were the construction of a cool water nursery building for egg incubation, hatching and early rearing and the ability to rear fish under intensive, recirculation conditions, the construction of 14 modern rearing ponds, and construction of a water supply and distribution system that includes a high capacity well. A water reuse system takes water from the cold water side of the hatchery that has been filtered and disinfected with ultraviolet light for use in the new cool water facility. A wastewater system cleans water leaving the hatchery to the highest level possible before releasing it to the Pine River, a Class 1 trout stream.

The third and final phase of this project is currently on hold pending budget availability. This phase will include the restoration of the wetlands, springs and headwaters of a stream that were on the site before the old hatchery was built more than a century ago. A backup groundwater well will also be constructed to supply both the cool and cold water sides of the hatchery. □

DAVID PEDERSON, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, Midwest Region



Tom Johnson from construction and design firm HDR checks the incubation stacks during the hatchery's commissioning.

RESTORE & ENHANCE

*25th anniversary of
the Service's Partners
for Fish and Wildlife
Program*

by MATTHEW FILSINGER and JOE MILMOE

Mission: To efficiently achieve voluntary habitat restoration on private lands, through financial and technical assistance, for the benefit of federal trust species.

The Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) program was officially established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1987. A group of Service biologists and numerous conservation partners had the vision to look beyond the boundaries of government fee-title holdings and see the need to work cooperatively with private landowners. They recognized that nearly 73 percent of U.S. lands are in private ownership and a vast majority of federal trust species used these areas during their life cycle. Intense stakeholder outreach concluded that the most effective way to achieve conservation success was to provide direct financial and technical assistance.

The Partners program was designed to complement many of the traditional Service easement programs by offering restoration and enhancement agreements

for shorter time periods. This gives private individuals options to improve their property for targeted wildlife species and avoid having to make the sometimes difficult decision on a long-term easement contract.

On-the-ground activities for the Partners program started in the upper Midwest portions of the Prairie Pothole Region and were focused on wetland and grassland restoration for the benefit of migratory birds.

Growth has been tremendous during the past 25 years, and the program now provides assistance to all 50 states and U.S. territories. Today, more than 300 staff members serve the nation's private landowners including farmers, ranchers and corporations. Projects are implemented for a wide range of habitats with an emphasis on federal trust species, including those that are listed as threatened and endangered. The key to success has been the one-on-one relationships that are built with cooperators. These relationships, grounded in trust, are part of larger community-based conservation efforts. The Partners program, in many instances, is the first introduction many people have to the Service.

While the program started out as an opportunistic program, over the decades, it has become extremely strategic in its approach. Five major goals guide the group: 1) Conserve Habitat, 2) Broaden and Strengthen Partnerships, 3) Improve Information Sharing and Communication, 4) Enhance our Workforce and 5) Increase Accountability. These are captured in a strategic plan driven by defined geographic focus areas and select focal species within those boundaries. Development is from the bottom-up and a majority of the decision-making occurs at the field level. The business model is to maintain flexibility and a streamlined approach to delivery, while capitalizing on the strengths of partners and their resources. The program has done a tremendous job of leveraging at a rate of 4:1, essentially taking every dollar and maximizing its impact by utilizing four dollars of non-Partners funds.

The program has gained national recognition as a vanguard in the new era of cooperative conservation based on the premise that fish and wildlife conservation is a responsibility shared by citizens and the government. It is using cutting-edge restoration and enhancement techniques along with deploying proven methods of communicating and partnership building. The conservation landscape is ever-changing and influenced by natural, economic, social and political factors. Future progress will be defined by how the program adapts and reacts to those changes. The core foundation of the program lies in the time-tested relationships with people and those partnerships will carry the program into the future as it deals with new challenges. □

MATT FILSINGER, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Mountain-Prairie Region,

JOE MILMOE, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Headquarters Office



A private landowner meets with Partners program state and regional coordinators to discuss plans for habitat restoration on his ranch.




Partners Biologist Gib King with private landowner, certifying completion of a habitat restoration project.

worked
with

44,000 
private LANDOWNERS

more than 
3,000 PARTNERING
organizations

restored &
enhanced

9,200 
MILES
of stream
habitat

1,260,000 
ACRES OF WETLANDS

Below: The Partners Program is delivered by more than 300 full-time staff located throughout all 50 states and territories. Staff gathered for the first time in decades at the 20th Anniversary workshop in 2006.

3,235,000 
ACRES
of uplands



USFWS

*Career Discovery Intern
Program introduces diverse
freshmen and sophomores
to nature, the Service*

by JENNIFER LAPIS

changing life



LAMAR GORE

On a sunny day last June, Jamal McDonald found himself standing on the bank of the Potomac River near Laurel, Maryland,—waiting to climb into a kayak for a four-mile journey downstream.

“I’d never been in a kayak before,” McDonald, a 19-year-old economics major from Howard University in Washington, D.C., said later “I was nervous at first, but quickly got the hang of it, and relaxed enough to enjoy myself and all the scenery surrounding the river.”

McDonald is one of 62 college students, primarily from urban areas, who participated in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2011 Career Discovery Intern Program (CDIP). The program recruits diverse freshmen and sophomores to work for the Service during a 12-week learning and training experience. They spend their summer working in every program area of the Service and on a broad range of projects, from biological monitoring and habitat restoration to maintenance and recreational public use programs.

“Many students in cities do not grow up with access to the natural outdoors,” said Lamar Gore, one of the CDIP coordinators. “They don’t hunt, bird watch or even take hikes in natural areas. For some, the woods are a place you are supposed to stay away from, often for fear of bugs, animals or just getting lost. So when it comes time to think about what

they want to do for a career, working in natural resource conservation never crosses their mind.”

And Gore should know. Now the acting chief of civil rights and diversity for the Service’s Northeast Region, he grew up in Trenton, New Jersey, where nature was not a part of everyday life. But Gore’s uncle was an avid angler and often invited him to go fishing. This introduction to nature was reinforced by a middle school teacher, who introduced Gore to other aspects of nature and the outdoors. Gore remembers a sixth-grade field trip to Stokes State Park in New Jersey that hooked him, inspiring him to pursue an education and career in natural resources.

Fast forward to 2008, when Gore and colleagues in the National Wildlife Refuge System in the Northeast were brainstorming about how to capture young people’s energy and enthusiasm for learning and, at the same time, introduce people from diverse backgrounds to the types of careers available in natural resource conservation.

“We had a problem recruiting diverse applicants for job openings,” said Gore.

“We knew we had to do something to get more young college students interested in natural resource careers.”

Gore and his co-workers set out to develop a diversity internship program that would not only expose diverse students to the work of the Service, but also expose Service employees to diverse students. To help recruit students, the Service partnered with the Student Conservation Association, an organization dedicated to building the next generation of conservation leaders.

The CDIP program aligns with the Department of the Interior’s Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative, employing, educating and engaging young people from all backgrounds to explore, preserve and connect with their natural and cultural heritage.

“Ultimately, we hope to see some of these students progress through the Service’s student training program, but we also expect many of them to pursue careers in a variety of areas, with a more rounded understanding of conservation and the work of the Service,” said Gore.



Left: Service staff prepare for a CDIP boat outing at NCTC. Below: Jamal McDonald at Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia and North Carolina.



“The Fish and Wildlife Service has an awesome mission...and [I] am incredibly excited to explore a career path with the Service.”

Jamal McDonald

And it is working. Since CDIP began in the Service’s Northeast Region in 2008, it has expanded to include the Southeast and Midwest regions. So far, 139 students have graduated from the program. Four are now permanent Service employees, and four more are participating in one of the Service’s student training programs, which may lead to employment opportunities in the future. Nine other program alumni report they are pursuing a career in conservation.

While youth employment is one important element of the program, creating a diverse and inclusive workplace is equally important. CDIP is a foundational part of the Northeast Region’s initiative to create an inclusive workplace, called for in the Department of the Interior’s first-ever Inclusive Workplace Statement.

“CDIP students have been hosted at 58 Service field stations,” said Gore. “They are bringing differences of thought, background, education, experience, socio-economic status, occupation, language—you name it—into the workplace. All of these differences help our field stations

think more creatively, and solve problems in a more inclusive manner. They are helping us become what the Secretary calls ‘the Department of America.’”

Joe McCauley, chief of Realty for the Northeast Region, hosted CDIP students when he managed the Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex, and knows how beneficial the program is to the students, and to the Service.

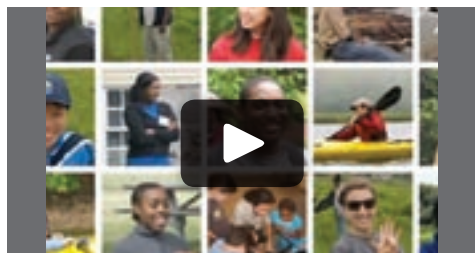
“CDIP is like a two-way mirror,” said McCauley. “Service staff can share their passion about fish and wildlife conservation with the future leaders of society, and students can explore potential career opportunities. Everyone involved with the program is exposed to a more diverse outlook about natural resource conservation and stewardship than they were before.”

As for McDonald, the program had a significant effect on him. He spent the summer in the Northeast Regional Office coordinating CDIP outreach and traveling to some refuges to produce videos about the program. Now, he’s exploring a career with the Service. Last fall, as a sophomore at Howard University he was hired as a STEP employee working as a financial clerk. Being an economics major, McDonald had never considered working for a conservation organization. After his experience with CDIP and the Service, he is still following his major interest of economics, but now with a more open mind and broader look at where those skills and educational knowledge can be applied. “The Fish and Wildlife Service has an awesome mission,” said McDonald. “I’m an economics major, but I learned that the Service needs people with my background and am incredibly excited to explore a career path with the Service.” □

JENNIFER LAPIS, Public Affairs, Northeast Region

CDIP and Diversity

Watch the video <youtu.be/EI7hR8gl4ZQ>



Documenting Success

CDIP students create a capstone project that documents their personal experiences and progress over the 12-week summer program. To meet the 2011 and 2010 CDIP cohort and see their capstone projects, visit the Northeast Region’s Youth Employment webpage at <fws.gov/northeast/youth>.

by NICOLE OSBORN

One Leap

Student makes a difference for her school, community and endangered frogs

With help from San Bernardino NWR and many others, girl restores Arizona pond's habitat



KELLY GLENN-KIMBRO

What can one high school student do to save an endangered species? Ask Mackenzie Kimbro of Douglas, Arizona. // Just before starting high school, Mackenzie and her mother spotted an overgrown pond near her new stomping grounds at Douglas High School. She had been looking for a “Supervised Agricultural Experience” to meet a requirement of her Future Farmers of America chapter. That was the summer she first learned about the endangered Yaqui Top Minnow, Yaqui Chub and Chiricahua leopard frog.

With help of her mother, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, other volunteers and partners, Mackenzie began her efforts to restore the pond’s habitat and increase the number of the two native fish and one native frog species that rely on it. Mackenzie and her mom soon got approval from the school administration and her agriculture education teacher to begin renovating the pond. From there, one of the first people they sought out was Bill Radke, the refuge manager at San Bernardino NWR, who immediately got on board with the plan. He and his staff have been actively involved ever since.

The newly renovated pond supplies improved habitat for the endangered Yaqui Top Minnow and Yaqui Chub (used by the Service as stock fish), and the newly landscaped ranariums house a growing population of endangered Chiricahua leopard frogs.

The pond was established as a safe haven for endangered fish and frogs in the mid-1990s by the Service and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, but it had fallen into disarray. It was a jungle of 8- to 10-year-old cattails, dead and downed trees, overgrown vegetation, and a body of water hidden in the morass. While the two endangered fish species appeared healthy, there were no more frogs. The existing pond did contain two small ranariums, or frog nurseries, but they had been empty of frogs for years.

Mackenzie and her mother soon found that the pond was on the chopping block because it cost the school so much money. In fact, over the past few years the water bill for the pond had fluctuated between \$800 and \$2,400 a month.

Radke knew that water for that facility should be much less expensive, and it was soon discovered that the pond had been leaking water for some time. Radke and his staff provided the start-up equipment and the restoration began. Refuge staff used heavy equipment to remove thousands of cattails and U.S. Forest Service crews used chainsaws to thin out the trees.

Several items were donated for the project, including rocks and dirt, and native grass hay from the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Mackenzie was also able to secure a donated liner that seals the pond and prevents leakage. Funding for the project has come from several sources including money from Douglas High School, from the Taylor Grazing Act and from a \$500 Arizona Public Service grant.

The San Bernardino NWR—whose staff has contributed a considerable amount of time, labor, and equipment to the effort—is located on the U.S.-Mexico border in Cochise County, Arizona. The 2,369-acre ranch was acquired by the Service in 1982 to protect the water resources and provide habitat for endangered native fish.

Other partners for the project include, Douglas High School Science Department, the Diamond A Ranch, Freeport McMoRan, Maddux & Sons Inc., U.S. Forest Service 4-Man Fire Crew, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, City of Douglas Water Department, Arizona Public Service, Douglas City 4-H Club, Arizona Game and Fish Department and several private volunteers including Linda Gomez, Grant Watkins, Don Decker, Wendy Glenn (Mackenzie's grandma), and Kelly Glenn-Kimbro (Mackenzie's mother).

Today, the newly renovated pond supplies improved habitat for the endangered Yaqui Top Minnow and Yaqui Chub (used by the Service as stock fish), and the newly landscaped ranariums house a growing population of endangered Chiricahua leopard frogs. These frogs will eventually be used to stock other ponds in the frog's historic range.

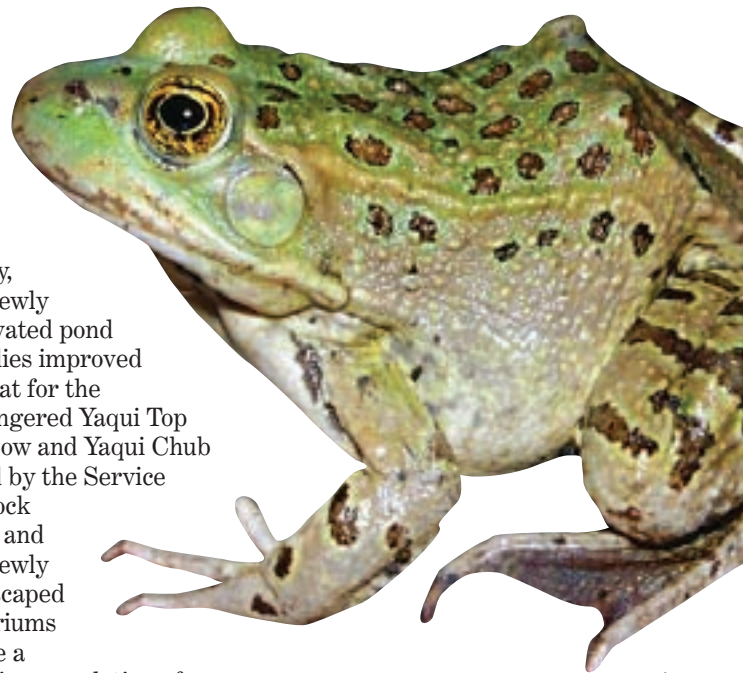
“Mackenzie took a good project that was languishing, and brought new life to it,” said Radke, the refuge manager. “The benefits to fish, frogs and students have been tremendous.”

Although the school district's water bill will continue to fluctuate slightly as pond improvement and maintenance continues, the team has reduced the water bill from more than \$2,000 a month at the end of 2009 to about \$200 at the end of 2010. This significant savings has helped the project gain further support from both the school and the community.

The eventual plan, according to Mackenzie, is to have a pond that is accessible to Douglas School District students in every grade (kindergarten through 12) and every department—including Arts and Science. The high school administration supports Mackenzie's vision and even hosted an open house on May 25, 2011, to show off the work that has been done to date.

The pond is still a work in progress, but the work that has already been done has not only saved the school a good deal of money and water, it has created a great teaching opportunity for students at Douglas High, as well as from surrounding schools. Most importantly, the pond now serves as a home for the endangered Chiricahua leopard frogs, and serves as a great example of what can happen when the Service teams up with caring citizens to make the natural world a better place! □

NICOLE OSBORN, External Affairs, Southwest Region



The endangered Chiricahua leopard frog was one species restored to a forgotten and overgrown pond meant to be a safe haven.

JIM ROBAUGH/USFWS

Chinese Refuge Workers Learn American Culture, Conservation at Bandon Marsh NWR

After 2009 trip to China wildlife reserves, Oregon refuge manager welcomes Chinese colleagues

In the summer of 2009, it was my good fortune to join a team of refuge employees who traveled to northeast China to consult with our Chinese counterparts on management of their wildlife reserves (refuges). Our trip was a whirlwind visit to many locations over a two-week period, although two members of our group remained in China for two additional weeks to work at a reserve.

In the summer of 2011, I invited two Chinese colleagues to join us at Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, where we were in the third and final year of constructing a large tidal marsh restoration project. These exchanges between the U.S. and China are conducted under the auspices of the Nature Conservation Protocol, an agreement signed in 1986 between the Department of the Interior and China's State Forestry Administration. The Protocol marked its 25th anniversary in 2011.

On July 24, 2011, JIA Yifei and XU Yingshou arrived at the Portland International Airport. From then until they boarded their return flight six weeks later they immersed themselves in American culture and worked side by side with us and our partners on Bandon Marsh NWR. This was their first international travel so everything was new and exciting to them. JIA is a student at the prestigious Beijing Forestry

University, working on his Ph.D. studying Siberian cranes. XU is an administrator at the same university, but upon his return to China he entered a Ph.D. program in Reserve Management.

Our staff, volunteers and Friends Group took great care of our visitors from China. They even recruited YU Miao, a Chinese National living in Texas, as an interpreter, which made their learning experience that much more rewarding. During their time in Bandon, JIA and XU helped us with many aspects of the restoration project. They participated in bird, fish, amphibian and water quality monitoring studies, removed non-native invasive plants, monitored construction to protect archaeological resources and much more. They came to fully appreciate the concept and value of working in partnership with many other groups such as Ducks Unlimited, the Coquille Indian Tribe, Federal Highway Administration and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. They also assisted with ongoing field research by graduate students—helping with archaeological resource digs and sampling of biofilm on the mudflats.

JIA and XU were amazed at the tremendous effort and expense incurred by the Service and its partners in undertaking the restoration project, but they completely understood its value to fish and wildlife populations, including shorebirds, some species of which spend time in both the U.S. and China during their annual breeding and migration cycle.

The Chinese visitors' final week in Bandon was an exciting one for us all as the removal of the dikes restored tidal flows to the refuge where they had been blocked for more than 100 years. The smiles on their faces were nearly as big as ours. It was obvious they understood and cared!

During their final week in the U.S. we traveled to some other refuges to diversify their understanding of refuge management and some of the challenges we face. We visited Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge and Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, where they learned about endangered species and water (lack of) issues. They also learned about the "Walking Wetlands" program, an Integrated Pest Management technique that rotates blocks of farmland with flooded wetlands to organically suppress plant parasitic nematodes and other soil diseases and pests, which could possibly be applied successfully in China.

We visited Summer Lake State Wildlife Area en route to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. At Malheur they learned about the tremendous attention the refuge has devoted to protecting redband trout while managing wetlands, and were familiarized with the extensive habitat damage caused by non-native carp. Perhaps their most vivid memory of the trip to Malheur will remain the airboat ride provided by the staff on a glassy Malheur Lake.

The cultures of the U.S. and China are very different, but wildlife conservation and management is a common link worldwide. I can't begin to tell you how much our staff enjoyed working with, learning from and living with our Chinese colleagues last summer. It is safe to say that many of us have made lifelong friends. □

ROY LOWE, Oregon Coast National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Pacific Region



Top: JIA Yifei (center) bags a sample of biofilm collected from the surface of the intertidal mudflats on Bandon Marsh NWR as XU Yingshou (left) and graduate student Aileen Miller (right) assist.

Bottom left: XU Yingshou (left) collects soil and archaeological material from a research site on Bandon Marsh NWR as interpreter YU Miao (right) looks on.

Bottom right: JIA Yifei (left) and XU Yingshou (right) from the Beijing Forestry University spent five weeks working with refuge staff, volunteers and partners on Bandon Marsh NWR.





Ding Goes to Russia

And writes a book about it

by DAVID KLINGER

Darling's travelogue suggested 'Russia isn't nearly so red as has been painted,' but he wasn't ready to move there.

Was the "Father of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service" deceived by the International Communist Conspiracy?

Hardly. Anyone who could outfox President Franklin Roosevelt around budget time was no pushover.

He was a staunch Iowa Republican, designer of the first Federal Duck Stamp, and first director of Franklin Roosevelt's revitalized Bureau of Biological Survey, immediate predecessor to today's Fish and Wildlife Service.

But Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, famed cartoonist for the *Des Moines Register* was something of a "fellow traveler" in the Soviet Union, three years before he assumed the helm of this agency.

His 1931 trip to Russia, reputedly at the invitation of dictator Joseph Stalin, resulted in a curious 5-week sojourn in the Workers' Paradise. There, Darling ruminated on everything from wheat harvests and communal bathing to abandoned Czarist palaces and the indolent Russian 5-day work week.

"Bolshevism cures everything," Darling initially rhapsodized. "If you are breaking out in a red rash or are afflicted with conservatism, one dose of Russia will make you well. Every American ought to make a trip to Russia at least once just to see what happens when the upper crust of society gets too heavy and overbearing and the proletariat rises up and gives it the axe."

Darling summarized his experience in *Ding Goes to Russia*, a meandering and liberally illustrated travelogue that can still occasionally be found on dusty library bookshelves. His book harkens back to that naïve era before the advent of collectivist famine in the Ukraine, political purges in the upper ranks of the Soviet military, and the cataclysm of World War II that killed more than 20 million Russians.

Westerners, from cowboy humorist Will Rogers to singer and activist Paul Robeson, ventured to the new communist state by the late 1920s to experience first-hand the promised social benefits of a revolution that was then barely a decade old.

The world was intensely curious about what was going on in the new Soviet Union. Darling was one of a procession of Americans drawn to the collectivist state in the depths of their own Great Depression, when capitalism, it seemed, had failed the United States.

Stalin apparently had a soft spot (indeed, one of his few soft spots) for "Ding" Darling's political cartoons. And so the peripatetic cartoonist meandered from Leningrad to Moscow, down through the ethnic republics on the Black and Caspian Seas to Baku, and over to Minsk, on a summer idyll that yielded Darling's simple and charmingly readable tour guide.

His impressions ranged the gamut from enthusiastic approval to abject abhorrence, and Darling's book is no paean to socialism. Part political analysis, part impressionistic travelogue, Darling emerges in the pages of his short Baedeker as a barefoot prairie populist cut loose in the workers' state—part budding New Deal ideologue, part curmudgeonly Andy Rooney suffering indigestion and aching feet.

"Russia, in my judgment, is serving a most valuable common purpose in becoming a great laboratory in which all of the vagabond socialistic and economic vagaries of the age are being tried out in actual experiment," Darling wrote. "Fortunately, we are far enough away to be safe from all except the tremors of explosions which may result, and yet close enough to profit by any important discoveries that may prove successful."

Darling appeared alternately repelled and intrigued by what he experienced in the Soviet Union. The Russian revolution of 1917 "was followed by the wildest experiment in government ever devised. Like all new found liberty it turned into a debauchery of excesses. They tried everything. Nothing worked. In operation the socialistic theories failed to come up with the glorified prospectus. Pure Communism, taken straight, was too strong to swallow. Since then they have been diluting it and have poured in everything and anything that was handy to take the morning-after headache out of it."

Darling applauded the vitality of Russian youth, the cleanliness of the peasantry, the apparent absence of outward signs of militarism, and the country's advances in city planning ("a perfectly planned system of parks and children's playgrounds," Darling noted approvingly.) Most of all, he praised the attributes of the local population and the "sweetness of character of the common Russian people."



As objects of derision, Darling scorned Russian plumbing and train schedules, consolidation of small farms into state-run super-collectives, authoritarian state architecture, and the “absurd Soviet government.” Russian hotels he derided as “25-cent flophouses” and the Crimean resort of Yalta was Darling’s “beginning of the great disillusionment about the Russian fairy tale. The fleas were bad enough but the toilet facilities were worse. Even to an old duck-hunter who is not too particular, it was unspeakably and inexcusably bad.”

Darling proved remarkable prescient about certain aspects of the world’s first communist state. “Right now they could not maintain a major military war for six months,” Darling judged...as the Nazi war machine discovered exactly 10 years later. “Yes, everyone has a job in Russia. But they are not now getting even the ordinary comforts of life in return for their labors.”

On others, he was terribly off-base, as when he pointed to the “exaggerated stories of total destruction of the instinct to worship. No one is denied the privilege of going to church nor is he molested in any way as a result of it. The destruction of churches and elimination of religion has been considerably overstated.”

On balance, Darling suggests in *Ding Goes to Russia* that the nation he toured in 1931 was moving away from idealistic and worker-focused utopian communism to brutal state-ism. The needs of the people were quickly being subordinated to “an airtight bureaucracy, a capitalistic business on a large scale.” Five-year plans were out-sourcing Russian natural resources to international commerce, in return for foreign capital to finance the Soviet state’s relentless drive to industrialization.

“Russia isn’t nearly so red as has been painted,” Darling concluded. “Something has happened in the dye. Either the color has faded or it has crocked and come off in the wash. There is about as much Communism left in Russia as there is tobacco in their cigarets (sic). Most of the Russian tobacco, like their Communism, seems to be raised for export purposes and those of us who live outside of Russia are consuming most of the output while home folks are getting along on highly adulterated substitutes.”

Soviet communism thus dispensed with, Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling turned his attention to the plight of America’s ducks...and to building the future Fish and Wildlife Service. □

This is the twelfth in a series of short features about little-known aspects of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by DAVID KLINGER, who recently retired, of the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

pacific



DRIVE LOCALLY

Act Globally: Pacific Region Unveils its First All-Electric Vehicle

Continuing a Fish and Wildlife Service-wide effort to reduce carbon emissions, the Pacific Region has unveiled its first all-electric vehicle: a Nissan Leaf, which produces no tailpipe pollution and reduces dependence on petroleum.

The EPA rated the all-electric Nissan Leaf as getting the equivalent of 99 miles per gallon and emitting about 44 pounds of

carbon dioxide per 100 miles of driving. By contrast, gasoline emits about 19.4 pounds of CO₂ per gallon consumed.

Outfitted with what Nissan calls a “high response 80kW AC synchronous electric motor,” the Leaf is powered by a 24 kWh battery pack and has a range of 100 miles per charge. The 80kW motor puts out the equivalent of 107 horsepower, which might not seem impressive, but the electric motor’s flat torque curve and constant power output give the Leaf “a lot of get up and go,” said Matt How, a Pacific Region visual information specialist who helped get the Leaf into the fleet. “It’s more fun to drive than a V8!”

installation (a \$3,200 cost) in exchange for gathering data to help improve the technology.

Gradually, the idea of the first electric car in the region caught on. “In the end, everyone came together,” Hall said. “We couldn’t have done it without region-wide support. Folks from pretty much every program contributed whatever they could from their budgets to make this happen.” She also credits the cooperation of GSA, which allowed the installation of chargers in the building, encouraged test piloting and worked with Congress to lift the statutory price limitation in order for the federal government to be able to purchase an electric vehicle. Hall estimated the cost of the Leaf at around \$35,000.

Since its arrival at the Pacific Region headquarters in Portland in late 2011, the Leaf has been attracting a lot of attention. Wrapped with an eye-catching decal of Finnegan, a peregrine falcon, the Leaf “conveys our agency’s commitment to conserving wildlife,” How said. “It’s also the first of many steps toward achieving the Service’s 2020 carbon neutral mandate.”

Along with changes in policy and practice, How, Jung and Hall hope the Leaf will lead to changes in the way Service employees think and communicate. “We can’t buy or drive our way to carbon neutrality,” said How. “The strategy with the Leaf is not only to establish it as the leading choice of our motor pool, but also to create a rallying point around which we convey the agency’s conservation mission internally and externally.” □

AMANDA FORTIN, External Affairs,
Pacific Region

GIRL POWER

Pacific Regional Office Raises More Than \$4,000 for Girl Scouts Beyond Bars

In the spirit of the winter holidays, the Pacific Regional Office of the Fish and Wildlife Service presented the proceeds of its annual giving tree fundraiser—more than \$4,000—to Girls Scouts Beyond Bars (GSBB), an initiative established by Girls Scouts of America in 1992 to help girls whose mothers are in prison.

“The goal of our program is to bridge the gaps between incarcerated mothers and their daughters and to provide support for the girls that they might not otherwise have,” says Cassandra Ross, the Program Coordinator for GSBB. Twice a month, the girls of the GSBB Troop 40060 and their mothers meet at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility outside Portland, Oregon, to participate in troop activities like the cookie-kickoff and quilt-making, both of which, Ross says, center on “education and building a sense-of-self.” Once a month the girls travel to girls-only events where they meet and interact with other Girl Scouts to participate in what Ross calls “a typical Girl Scout experience.”

Falicia Manriquez, an intern with GSBB who works closely with the troop, says working with the girls is very rewarding because they “always remain positive despite their circumstances and they just bring so much joy to everyone they meet.” She says the girls are “rambunctious and full of energy” and really enjoy the time they spend doing activities with their



JANE CHODRAZY/USFWS

Left: Deanna Sawtelle with the Audubon Society of Portland, introduces the Leaf to Finnegan the peregrine falcon, the model for the artwork on the Pacific Region’s all-electric car.

It may be fun to drive but acquiring it wasn’t easy. “Since 2009 it has been a back and forth journey,” said Sue Jung, regional branch chief of General Services. “We had to get a lot of people on board. We had some roadblocks along the way.”

Sarah Hall, the region’s recovery program manager who spearheaded the effort to get the Leaf, said some of the roadblocks were navigated by enrolling the Leaf in a study through ECOTALITY, which provides a free charger and

RYAN HOFFER / USEFWS



Troop 42135 stand in front of the Giving Tree with their troop leader and Service contaminants biologist, Julie Concannon

moms and traveling to meet other troops. Both Manriquez and Ross say that finding the money for these activities and travel is one of the biggest challenges the program faces.

Julie Concannon, a contaminants biologist in the regional office and a longtime Girl Scout troop leader, brought the needs of the GSBB to the attention of the regional office and coordinated the giving tree. Concannon's Troop 42135 built the tree and it was installed in the reception area of Regional Director Robyn Thorson's office. The tree, lashed together with climbing rope and wood, was decorated with Girl Scout badges, topped with a sock monkey (Troop 42135's mascot to honor Jane Goodall) and hung with tags listing specific needs for the GSBB program. Those wishing to give to the tree selected a tag, made the corresponding donation and entered their name into a drawing for a gift.

Girls from Troop 40060 and Troop 42135 visited the Regional Office on December 22, 2011, to accept the proceeds of the giving tree and get to know the staff. Concannon and Regional Director Thorson presented the girls with a large stack of art supplies and a treasure box full of the donations.

"This was an incredible and unexpected gift," Ross said. After accepting the gifts, the girls talked with Thorson and other members of the Regional Office about their plans for the donation money and their futures, which may include the Service. "We haven't had a partnership with Fish and Wildlife in the past," Ross said, "but I think there is a great deal of opportunity for the two to team up in the future." □

AMANDA FORTIN, External Affairs, Pacific Region

midwest 

DOUBLE DUTY

Nature Park Named for Indiana Bat Receives Park and Rec Honor

Sodalis Nature Park, located on lands protected for an endangered Indiana bat under a habitat conservation plan by the Indianapolis Airport Authority, has been recognized as Outstanding Park Development by the Indiana Park and Recreation Association. Sodalis Nature Park, named for the Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis*, was dedicated in May 2011. The 209-acre park near Indianapolis offers visitors a place to hike, fish and learn more about the endangered bat that inhabits its woods.

Sodalis Nature Park is operated and maintained by Hendricks County Parks and Recreation on property owned by the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA).

Under the habitat conservation plan, the IAA has acquired more

than 2,200 acres of land in Marion and Hendricks counties. The permanently protected areas support wetland conservation in addition to providing protected habitat for bats.

The vision for the park began in 2009, when the airport authority and Hendricks County Parks and Rec began working with the Service to ensure the proposed park would not be incompatible with the area's core conservation mission. They entered into a 20-year lease agreement to establish Sodalis Nature Park within the permanently protected area. The unique partnership allows visitors the rare opportunity to enjoy a robust, permanently protected wildlife habitat, something they will not experience at any other park in the region, particularly one in a major metropolitan area.

The Service's Bloomington, Indiana, Ecological Services Field Office worked with the Indianapolis Airport Authority and the Hendricks County Park Board to develop the HCP and make the park a possibility.



GEORGIA PARHAM / USEFWS

Visitors to Sodalis Nature Park can hike, fish and learn more about the endangered Indiana bat, for which the park is named.

around the service

Scott Pruitt, Project Leader for the Service's Bloomington Field Office, said, "Sodalis Nature Park is here because of the Indiana bat and because the people and agencies involved wanted to make this park a reality. Visitors to Sodalis not only get the opportunity to enjoy a first-class park, they get to become part of an effort working to save an endangered species, one that is symbolic of Indiana's natural heritage."

Sodalis Nature Park includes a 5½-acre catch-and-release fishing pond, more than three miles of nature trails, a quarter mile of paved trails, educational areas, picnic areas and other amenities. To say the new park has been well accepted is an understatement: An astounding 51,000 visitors explored the park from May through December last year.

"One of the most incredible things about the park is it marks the first time such a unique partnership has ever been done, and the first time land under permanent protection for an

endangered species has been opened as a park," said William Roche, superintendent of the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation Department. "To open a park on permanently protected land is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Roche added. "The Sodalis Nature Park has been warmly received by the community, and the recognition of its uniqueness and importance has now been acknowledged by park professionals throughout the state."

"The Sodalis Nature Park reflects our commitment to the benefits of a creative land-use policy that supports thriving populations of local wildlife while offering educational, recreational and economic benefits to citizens in the region," said Greta Hawvermale, the airport authority's senior director of engineering and environmental matters. "We thank the Hendricks County Parks and Recreation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, whose partnership was vital in the creation of this truly unique park," she added. □

TOM MACKENZIE / USFWS



Left to right: Steve Myers, *Hiatchania Ranch*; Ken Salazar, *Secretary of the Interior*; Richard Hilsenbeck, *The Nature Conservancy*; Dan Ashe, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director*; and David Houghton, *Vice President of Conservation Programs, National Wildlife Refuge Association* post the first National Wildlife Refuge boundary at Everglades Headwaters NWR (the 556th in the system). January 18 near Hines City, Florida, about 50 miles south of Orlando.

southeast

WELCOME ABOARD

Salazar Announces Establishment of Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

As part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar accepted a 10-acre donation of land in south-central Florida to officially establish the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area—conserving one of the last remaining grassland and longleaf pine savanna landscapes in eastern North America.

The new refuge and conservation area—the 556th unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System—is being established through a land donation from the Nature Conservancy of Florida with the support of local ranchers and landowners who have worked cooperatively with Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve their lands while retaining their right to raise cattle or crops, an approach championed by the Obama administration.

The Service is working closely with ranchers and other private landowners, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other state agencies, conservation organizations like the Nature Conservancy and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, users' groups, Native American tribes and federal agencies in the creation of the new refuge and conservation area.

"We are inspired by the excellent conservation opportunities that exist here as a result of the efforts of our ranching community to protect working lands across generations," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "The extraordinary vision of our many partners will help protect significant wildlife species while supporting a way of life that is vital to our citizens. This effort will restore wetlands in the headwaters area, preserve working ranches, and support a healthy environment for central and south Florida, as well as increase opportunities to hunt, fish, hike, bird watch, and learn about the importance of this landscape."

For more information on the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area, visit fws.gov/southeast/evergladesheadwaters. □

FLYING HIGH

Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge Earns Praise from Frommer

Travel guru Arthur Frommer has ranked Florida's Sanibel Island his all-time favorite travel destination—ahead of Bali, Paris and St. John—because the Service's J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge makes the island a mecca for "thousands of birds of every species."

The refuge is world-famous for its spectacular congregations of migratory birds, such as American white pelicans and wading birds such as roseate spoonbills, anhingas and wood storks. The birds, says Frommer, "bask in the sun after diving for fish, and are one of the great natural sights of wildlife in America."

Frommer voiced his preference in a blog on December 28 of his 10 "favorite travel destinations."

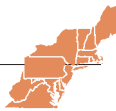
Nearly 800,000 people visit the refuge each year. Winter months

are the busiest, supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland says, when the refuge offers more than 30 free programs a week, including birding and biking tours.

Westland called the listing an honor not just for the refuge but for the National Wildlife Refuge System—made up of more than 550 national wildlife refuges across the country that protect habitat for wildlife. "Hopefully this is a springboard for people to visit national wildlife refuges in their own backyards as well," she said.

Sanibel Island's national wildlife refuge was established in 1945 to provide feeding, nesting and roosting areas for migratory birds. In 1967 the refuge was renamed in honor of conservationist and Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling. From 1934 to 1935 Darling served as chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, a forerunner of the Service. □

northeast



OFFERINGS

Atlantic Salmon from Flooded Vermont Hatchery Donated to Tribes

When Hurricane Irene made landfall on August 28, 2011, it drenched areas in the Northeast with torrential rains. Areas in Vermont were devastated by the flooding in the storm's wake. In Bethel, Vermont, the White River rose above its banks leaving its namesake national fish hatchery largely under water. When the water receded it left behind up to six feet of mud.

Twenty-five percent of the hatchery's population of Atlantic salmon broodstock was lost. The salmon were being raised to support Atlantic salmon restoration efforts in the Connecticut River. The river water that flooded the facility exposed remaining fish to the risk of pathogens and other threats, such as didymo, an invasive algae known as "rock snot."

When the decision was made to decontaminate the hatchery last fall, fishery managers and Northeast Region Native American Liaison D.J. Monette began exploring the possibility of donating the salmon to tribes for ceremonial purposes as an alternative to destroying them.

The Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission, which oversees the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, agreed that the fish, still viable for human consumption, could be given to federally recognized tribal governments in the Northeast for use in



John Miller, a member of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, holds a donated salmon, while hatchery staff in the background process surplus fish.

traditional feasts, special events, ceremonies or use in tribal food banks.

The first of the fish donated from the facility went to the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, a Maine tribe that historically harvested Atlantic salmon. The tribe marked its 20th anniversary of federal recognition in November and used the salmon in a traditional feast for a thousand people.

In the end, all of the salmon at the hatchery—about 17,000 pounds once processed—was donated to nine tribes in the Northeast. □

D.J. MONETTE, Native American Liaison, Northeast Region

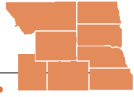


Wading birds huddle offshore at sunset at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Florida's Sanibel Island.

GEORGE GENTRY / USFWS

D. J. MONETTE/USFWS

mountain-prairie



WALKING THE TALK

Unique Program Combines Education and Fitness

The National Elk Refuge in Wyoming has collaborated with St. John's Medical Center in Jackson to offer an activity that combines an interpretive talk with a hospital program encouraging wellness.

St. John's borders the south end of the National Elk Refuge and is immediately adjacent to the refuge administrative offices. Outdoor Recreation Planner Lori Iverson saw an advertisement in December for the medical facility's Walk and Talk Wellness Series, twice-weekly outings that combine a noontime half-hour

walk with discussions led by hospital staff. Speakers on the tours discuss their area of specialty, including hearing, diabetes and nutrition.

Iverson, a longtime friend of the Community Health Information Center's Program Director Julia Heemstra, offered to tag along on one of the outings and talk about various aspects of refuge management since the walks take participants past the refuge headquarters and out onto the Refuge Road. On a balmy January afternoon, a small group took advantage of the first walk to focus on a subject matter other than personal health.

"Lori is the only outside speaker we've had so far, and we got really positive feedback on that particular walk," Heemstra explained. "We've scheduled another date later this month

for the National Elk Refuge to accompany us because the last one was so well received. We simply ran out of time for all the participants to get their questions answered, and we had people disappointed they couldn't attend that day."

St. John's Walk and Talk series was initiated as part of the hospital's wellness program but also serves as a way to reach out to the community and allow others to become involved in their wellness activities.

"We were thrilled to be able to help out with the program," Iverson said. "It's a wonderful example of combining community resources in a way that meets each organization's goals." □

LORI IVERSON, National Elk Refuge, Mountain-Prairie Region

Alaska

CODE COMFORT

Genetic Research Informs Fishery Management in Alaska

Did you know that the Conservation Genetics Laboratory (CGL) in Anchorage is the oldest of the six facilities the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has with genetics research capacity?

Established in 1987, the lab has a mission to provide genetics expertise for conservation and management issues in Alaska. The establishment of the CGL was closely connected with a long-term research and management project on Yukon River chum salmon. In its early years this project focused on evaluating the genetic stock structure of spawning populations of chum salmon in the watershed. The vision of those early years has been realized. Since 2003, the stock of origin of chum salmon entering the river has been estimated using genetic techniques by the CGL on a weekly basis through the summer and early fall, and the results have been used for in-season management of Yukon fisheries.

The chum salmon project is an excellent example of "mixed-stock analysis," the use of genetic data to estimate the origin of animals that are not on their breeding grounds. This analysis is a common theme in many of the CGL's projects and has been applied to a number of species, including Chinook salmon, coho salmon, Dolly Varden, Bering cisco and

USFWS

Julia Heemstra leads the group back toward St. John's after the first collaborative Walk and Talk program.





JASON EVERETT

The Alaska Region's Conservation Genetics staff at a 2011 ice-fishing excursion on Fire Lake. From left to right: Geoff Cook, John Wenburg, Jeff Olsen, Ora Schlei, Pearl Sethi, Suresh Sethi, Cara Lewis, Randal Loges, Blair Flannery, Penny Crane, Bill Spearman and Jason Everett.

sheefish. Such studies can provide information on the stock composition of commercial and subsistence catches and can be used to evaluate stock-specific migration patterns or stock-specific habitat use in rearing or overwintering areas.

Aside from mixed-stock analysis, the lab staff has used genetic data in other projects, including pedigree reconstruction and the estimation of heritability of traits, species identification using DNA barcoding, evaluating the genetic health of populations, determining the influence of landscape features on population structure and diversity and employing genetic data in the estimation of population size.

John Wenburg is the director of the Conservation Genetics Lab, and Jeff Olsen is the deputy director. Together, they supervise a permanent staff of nine: Geoff Cook, Penny Crane, Jason Everett, Blair Flannery, Cara Lewis, Randal Loges, Ora Schlei, Suresh Seti and Bill Spearman. Angus Bromaghin is the lab's long-term student intern. The

lab also sponsors short-term internships, for students from other communities to get an introduction to genetics.

Over the years, the Conservation Genetics Lab has enjoyed working with many partners, including the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska's National Wildlife Refuges and Fish and Wildlife Field Offices, the U.S. Geological Survey and National Park Service, Alaska Native Organizations, University of Alaska, and Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

During the lab's almost 30-year history, it has both witnessed and been a part of the integration of genetic data in the successful conservation and management of Alaska's fish species. Visit the CGL website, <alaska.fws.gov/fisheries/genetics/index.htm> to learn more. □

PENNY CRANE, Conservation Genetics Laboratory, Alaska Region

Pacific Southwest



SHOVEL READY Carlsbad FWO: Let's Plant that Habitat!

Kindergartners through sixth graders at Capri Elementary School in Encinitas, California, have transformed approximately 1.5 acres of land into native habitat.

The area, once covered with crab grass, palms, weeds and other non-native plants, now contains water-wise native California plants that provide food, water and shelter for butterflies, bugs, small animals, birds and other wildlife.

This schoolyard habitat surrounds the school's soccer/physical education field and is part of a community park that is open to the public on weekends. Visitors to the field and park will be able to enjoy the beauty and learn about the newly created native habitat.

In 2011, Capri Elementary School's Schoolyard Habitat Project was awarded more than \$5,500 through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Schoolyard Habitat Program. Additionally, the school received about \$16,000 in funds and in-kind contributions from multiple partners and cooperators to help the native habitat restoration project.

The Schoolyard Habitat Program is designed to fill a specific niche that achieves the mission and goals of the school, the Service and the community. It is a naturalized habitat area that is created

by students, for students and addresses multiple environmental and educational concepts that benefit everyone involved.

By late November 2011, "150 volunteers and over 500 kids helped make this project happen, and that includes about 2,000 hours invested thus far," said Susan Addams, Capri Elementary Project Volunteer Coordinator. "This was a team effort that involved the support and dedication of the school, parents, teachers and numerous community partners."

This Schoolyard Habitat Project has been integrated into Capri's bilingual (English and Spanish) and standard curriculums to encourage long-term environmental stewardship. The environmental education curriculum will integrate science, English-language arts, selected children's literature and student projects designed to enhance the environment and prepare students to become future scientists, economists and green technology leaders.

Capri Elementary students will now maintain the restored habitat area, measure plant growth and record new animal species they observe. They will also continue to experience new challenges and learning opportunities such as studying water conservation, weather patterns and sponsoring younger classes by taking them on field trips through different habitat zones.

One exciting project will be when the students start creating websites for their plants. Once their websites have been created, they will make smartphone bar code tags to attach to each plant.

The habitat will serve not only as an ongoing educational tool to teach environmental principles and concepts, but also as a sanctuary for some students during recess wishing to explore the nature trails and participate in exploratory activities. Additionally, the habitat will provide opportunities for students to touch, harvest and even sell parts of plants "as fundraisers to help support the program long term.

Since the project began, parents and teachers have already seen positive changes in the way students interact with nature. "Many students check on their plants regularly and are more respectful and protective of the area and their young plants," said Addams. "There is a sense of pride and ownership." □

STEPHANIE WEAGLEY, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Pacific Southwest Region



California elementary school kids get their hands dirty as part of the Service's Schoolyard Habitat Program.

headquarters

WORD OF MOUTH

Learn Storytelling from the Pros

Storytelling is critical to our success in the conservation field. That's why the National Conservation Training Center has launched an online portal for sharing some of our nation's great conservation stories: America's WILD READ. It's a place where you can share insights and converse with renowned nature writers and readers from across the country.

"Created as a source of inspiration for Service staff and conservation partners, this literary travelogue has brought readers together around topics that are highly relevant to the work we do here at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service," says Anne Post, NCTC conservation librarian and project manager for the WILD READ. Such topics include "the importance of mentoring young people in the outdoors, the role community plays in conservation decision-making, how to

best return keystone species to ecosystems, and how to maintain wildness in urban areas."

Authors Margaret Atwood, Robert Michael Pyle, Terry Tempest Williams and the Service's own Dr. John Hartig of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge have led discussions on the WILD READ site <wildread.blogspot.com>, posting questions and creating dialogue with readers. If you haven't stopped by to visit the WILD READ online, we invite you to take a look and see what you think. The WILD READ is also a strong outreach tool for connecting with your local Friends group. At the link above, follow weekly posts and comment as often as you wish.

Upcoming reads include a fall discussion of Rachel Carson's bestseller *Silent Spring* on the 50th anniversary of its publication in 1962.

To share your ideas for future books to feature, please send your suggestions by email to <library@fws.gov>. We hope to see you on the WILD READ: <wildread.blogspot.com>. □



transitions

Headquarters

David Klinger, senior writer-editor at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, for the past 14 years, retired to Boise, Idaho, on April 2.

“April Fool’s Day—April 1—was taken, because it was a Sunday, so it had to be April 2,” says Klinger.

Klinger began his Fish and Wildlife Service career in 1977 in Washington, D.C., as a GS-4 clerk-typist, following brief service with the National Marine Fisheries Service, also in Washington. He rose to become a writer-editor and national press officer for the agency in its Washington headquarters until 1988, when he became assistant regional director—public affairs in Region 1 in Portland, Oregon.

There, in a two-person office, Klinger and assistant Arlene Ducret managed media relations, public communications, and outreach in the six-state region on issues ranging from the desert tortoise, spotted owl, and marbled murrelet to California water issues and Columbia River salmon. The short-staffed office was later expanded and a formal outreach component added to reflect the gravity of the region’s myriad conservation issues and controversies.

“I think the issue I’m most proud of, however, is how we handled the die-off of brown and white pelicans at the Salton Sea in California, the largest die-off, to date, of an endangered species,” says Klinger. “We put maximum information out to the press as quickly as we could. I didn’t coordinate with Washington or my regional director, I just did the right thing, because I knew it had to be done and there wasn’t any use delaying. Backed up by our technical experts and Dr. Milt Friend at the National Wildlife Health Laboratory in a series of then-innovative teleconferences, the Fish and Wildlife Service retained credibility on the issue from Day One and never lost it. Reporters later praised it as a textbook example of how to address a crisis issue with truth and forthrightness.”

Klinger joined NCTC in 1998 as a writer-editor, where he scripted motion pictures and videos, publications, and a series of off-beat articles for “Fish and Wildlife News” that explored the unknown aspects of the agency under the title, “The Fish and Wildlife Service You Don’t Know.” With no agency budget or management backing save for that provided by NCTC production division chief Steve Hillebrand, Klinger and co-workers fashioned the Service’s national exhibition honoring Rachel Carson at the 100th anniversary of her birth, with a display of photos, artifacts, and re-creations at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History that the *Boston Globe* hailed as a “charming” homage to the acclaimed Service writer and marine biologist. □



Greg Siekaniec, Deputy Director for Policy, retired in June to become chief executive officer of

Ducks Unlimited Canada. Greg was chief of the Refuge System from 2009 to 2011, and he presided over the *Conserving the Future* vision process and conference.

He also served as a key voice and leader on expanding public land conservation, including the new Flint Hills Legacy Conservation Area, a refuge in the tallgrass prairie region of eastern Kansas; the Dakota Grassland Conservation Area in the Dakotas and Montana; and the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation area in Florida.

Before becoming chief of the Refuge System, Greg spent eight years as refuge manager at the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, one of the Refuge System’s most remote units, and its more than 2,500 islands and nearly 5 million acres. While there, he partnered with national conservation organizations to restore island biodiversity and rid islands of destructive invasive species — foxes and rats — that had nearly eradicated native seabirds and other wildlife.

Siekaniec grew up on the boundary of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota and began his career as a refuge clerk at J. Clark Salyer National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota. He moved up to management

positions in Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming as well as Alaska. He served as deputy chief of the Refuge System before taking over leadership at Alaska Maritime Refuge in 2001. □

Pacific



The Pacific Region announced the selection of **Nanette Seto** as Chief for Migratory Birds and

Habitat programs. Her 21 years in conservation biology span all levels of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. From the field to headquarters, Nanette has brought her expertise to the Migratory Birds and Refuges programs and has led three of the four bird initiatives this year: the U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan, and Partners in Flight. The Pacific Region is happy to welcome her back in a new capacity.

A native of Hawaii, Nanette began her career with the Service in 1994 at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge as a biologist after earning her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in Zoology at the University of Hawaii. Much of her time at Midway was devoted to the biological monitoring and creation of habitat plans for nesting seabirds. After four years at Midway, her work as a wildlife biologist took her to Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Olympia, Washington, where she collaborated with members of the scientific and tribal

our people

communities and the public to develop the Nisqually NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

In 2002, she went to the Pacific Regional Office in Portland, Oregon, where she dedicated much of her time to coordinating waterbird issues with other federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, and the public. When the chance to work on policy-making at the Service's headquarters presented itself in 2008, Nanette rose to the challenge and moved her family to Washington, DC, where she focused on partnership-building with other federal agencies in order to strengthen ties and raise migratory bird awareness.

Nanette is looking forward to working on conservation issues she says are close to her heart, particularly those within the Pacific Flyway, such as the unintentional take of migratory birds, conservation of fish-eating birds, and landscape conservation. □

Southwest

Law Enforcement Refuge Officer **Rene Avendano** is back on patrol at the South Texas Refuge Complex, after returning from a seven-month deployment to Afghanistan. Rene is a gunnery sergeant with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Unit—2nd Platoon Charlie Company—1st BN 23rd Marines. Although currently in the Reserves, Rene served as an active duty Marine from 1988–1992 and is a highly decorated veteran with many honors/awards including: Armed Forces Reserve Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Afghan Campaign Medal, NATO Isaf Medal, and Humanitarian Medal. Rene has been an LE Refuge Officer since 2010, and we are glad to have him back at the South Texas Refuge Complex, Alamo, Texas. Thank you for your service, Rene. □

Law Enforcement Refuge Officer **Rick Gonzalez** is currently at FLETC in Glynco, Georgia, after returning from a 7-month deployment to Afghanistan. Rick is a gunnery sergeant with the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve



Marine Gunnery Sergeants Rene Avendano (left) and Rick Gonzalez are both Law Enforcement refuge officers at the South Texas Refuge Complex.

Unit—2nd Platoon Charlie Company—1st BN 23rd Marines. Although currently in the Reserves, Rick served as an active duty Marine from 1998–2003 and is a highly decorated veteran with many honors/awards including: Combat Action Ribbon, Global War On Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, and Afghan Campaign Medal. Rick joined the Fish and Wildlife Service family, just a few short weeks before he deployed and we will be glad to have him back at the South Texas Refuge Complex, Alamo, Texas. Thank you for your service, Rick. □

honors

Headquarters



Lewis E. Gorman III, Endangered Species Program-Headquarters partnership coordinator and its

representative to the Service's Connecting People With Nature Working Group, received the 2011 Volunteer of the Year Award from the National Environmental Education Foundation for its National Public Lands Day program.

Through his volunteer efforts on National Public Lands Day (NPLD) and year-round with his town's environmental committee, Lew spearheaded a program to build a trail system on Cherry Hill, New Jersey, public lands. He helped create 10 miles of trails, and two of these trails received National Recreational Trail designation by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 2011. Volunteers who have joined Lew on his projects include Eagle Scouts and the New Jersey Youth Corps.

During NPLD 2011, Lew led several volunteer projects including invasive tree removal, trail maintenance and improvements, and building of erosion control structures.

NPLD is a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation in partnership with several federal agencies including the Fish and Wildlife Service. NPLD supports the Service's Connecting People With Nature program goals by engaging people, especially youth, in conservation and the great outdoors and raising awareness of the value and benefits of the outdoors. □



John Schmerfeld, National Wildlife Refuge System climate change coordinator, has received

the 2011 Eugene W. Surber Professional Fisheries Biologist Award from the Virginia chapter of the American Fisheries Society. He was cited for his work as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) coordinator for the state from 2000 to 2010.

During his tenure, Schmerfeld was instrumental in settling cases that brought more than \$8 million to restoration of Virginia's aquatic resources. As a result, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Tech each established fully staffed freshwater cultivation facilities that have produced more than 2 million mussels as part of the Tennessee River drainage restoration program.

Among the cases Schmerfeld worked to settle was a 1998 incident in which a tanker truck overturned near the Clinch River, spilling 1,350 gallons of rubber accelerant and killing aquatic life for about seven miles downstream. The spill killed more than 700 endangered mussels, the largest loss since enactment of the Endangered Species Act in 1973. Under Schmerfeld's direction, the case was settled for \$3.8 million, with funding directed at mussel restoration, habitat protection and community education. □

in memoriam

Pacific

Celebrating the life of a dedicated service member: remembering Pat Hickey



Pat Hickey, the regional heavy equipment coordinator for the Pacific and Pacific Southwest regions, died

from a heart attack February 16 while on government business in Hawaii.

Pat's loss deeply impacts conservation professionals across the Fish and Wildlife Service family and partner agencies. Building from his first Service job as a maintenance mechanic at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeast Oregon, he devoted the past 20 years toward positive change on the people he worked with and the public he served.

As heavy equipment coordinator, Pat oversaw the safe and effective use of equipment. The first person to hold this position since it was created in 2005, Pat coordinated heavy equipment safety and training. He also identified the need for vehicle and equipment purchases, and coordinated the deployment of the maintenance workforce on special projects.

Before joining the Service, he owned the Silver Sage Restaurant in Burns, Oregon, for nine years. He previously worked as a carpenter and community service supervisor, served in the

U.S. Army from July 1966 to July 1968, and had 10 years of service with the Oregon State Police.

Pat designed and built two of his own homes, completing most of the work himself. He also was an accomplished horseman.

Pat was an employee of two regions, but his impact and reach were Service-wide. We remember Pat for the many people he touched in his career, and for his true passion and devotion to our conservation mission.

Pat is survived by Lisa Dave, Kelly Hickey, Pat Hickey Jr., and Debbie Hickey. □

Mountain-Prairie

Remembering Paul Van Ningen

"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot." —ALDO LEOPOLD

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lost a great friend, dedicated employee and generous mentor with the passing of Long Lake NWR Project Leader Paul Van Ningen, 56, on January 1, 2012. Paul was the project leader at Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota for 19 years, worked more than 34 years in

eight positions for the Service and served as a federal wildlife officer for more than 25 years of his career.

"As we reflect on past times with Paul, we will remember him as a dedicated family man. He was a strong leader and mentor to many—a man with a strong conservation ethic and a dedication to wildlife and natural resources," said Lloyd Jones, Refuge Manager at Audubon National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota. "Through his work, Paul left a large footprint on the prairies of North Dakota."


Paul and wife Kathy raised three sons—Adam, Aaron and Alex. Paul relished the time he spent teaching his boys about wildlife and natural resources, and he enjoyed sharing his passion for hunting with them. For a short time, he was able to share his love and passion with his grandchildren—Blake and Piper.

Paul's legacy will live on through his contributions to wildlife conservation, which will benefit future generations for decades. He will be greatly missed by his family, as well as his Service co-workers and friends. □

The Service's Honor Guard paid tribute to Paul's dedication to the Service's mission of wildlife conservation.



NOEL MATSON



In Dan Ashe's first year as director Service has made some big changes to keep conservation work flowing.

During a visit to the White River National Fish Hatchery in Bethel, Vermont, Dan Ashe gets up close and personal with a sea lamprey, a nuisance species that the Service is successfully controlling in Lake Champlain.



BOLDLY GOING

by MATT TROTT

June 30 marked the one-year anniversary of Director Dan Ashe's confirmation as the 16th Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was a groundbreaking year for the Service and for conservation as a whole.

Soon after he took office, Ashe flew off to the history-making National Wildlife Refuge System *Conserving the Future* Conference. Service employees, representatives of state wildlife agencies, sportsmen, wildlife enthusiasts and partners all gathered to develop a vision and plan the future of the refuge system. See all about it at americaswildlife.org.

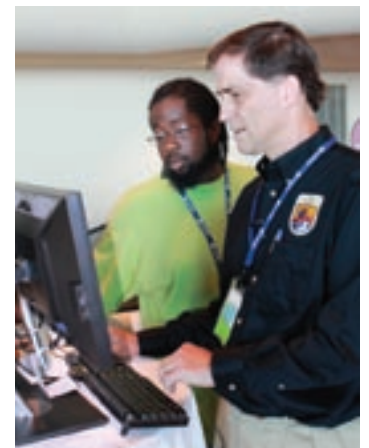
At the conference, Ashe emphasized the need to respect the past even as the Service was looking to the future. "Our challenge is not to look back to the safety of shore," he said, "but to have the courage to sail to the horizon, and discover the refuge system of tomorrow." But, he assured them, "our memories provide the inspiration to power the voyage."

For Ashe, whose father was a 37-year employee of the Service, the past is a particularly strong source of inspiration. He can tell tales about some of his best childhood days with his dad, visiting refuges and fish hatcheries.

Nevertheless, he has worked to instill in himself and others the need to be better. It is not a denigration of past achievements, he says. It's just: "Everyone can be better, a better husband, a better director, a better worker."

And Ashe believes the Service can be better. Indeed, he says, it must. "We have a workforce that is extremely passionate, dedicated and professional," Ashe says, "At the same time, it is very over-extended."

"Working harder isn't the answer," he says. "The Service needs to be better. We need to work smarter."



Volunteer Danny Williams from Operation Fresh Start helps Dan Ashe learn how to tweet at the social media station at the *Conserving the Future* conference last year in Madison, Wisconsin.

“ Our challenge is not to look back to the safety of shore, but to have the courage to sail to the horizon, and discover the refuge system of tomorrow.

An example of working smarter came September 20 when the Save Vanishing Species semipostal stamp went on sale at post offices. By purchasing these special stamps, only the fourth ever approved by Congress, at a rate of 55 cents per stamp—slightly above the cost of first-class postage—the public contributes directly to the on-the-ground conservation programs overseen by the Service’s Wildlife Without Borders programs. Buy yours at <fws.gov/international/semipostal/index.html>.

To enhance interest in buying stamps or in supporting conservation at all, the Service is working to show the public they have a personal stake in what the Service does—whether it’s by providing recreational opportunities on refuges, or by demonstrating the connection between species recovery and a sustainable economy. Ashe calls this maintaining relevance.

On September 29, the first urban national wildlife refuge in the Southwest Region was approved. The 570-acre Middle Rio Grande National Wildlife Refuge will be just a few miles south of Albuquerque, the largest metropolitan area in New Mexico.

“We need to bring the wonders of nature to all Americans,” Ashe says. “But more than that, we must strive to make the Service, and our professional culture, more inclusive and diverse.”

And earlier this year, the Service graduated its first Diversity Change Agent Training Class. The 65 employees from all levels of the agency are to serve as mentors and advocates for workforce diversity.

Another underserved group is people with disabilities. The Service learned its hiring and retention efforts regarding individuals with disabilities are paying off when in November it was recognized by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services as a Diversity Champion for its leadership in increasing employment and accessibility for people with disabilities.

The increase in human population also means an increase in confrontations between humans and wildlife as both compete for fewer natural resources. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a frequent flashpoint.

On September 9, a judge approved historic agreements that allow the Service to more effectively focus efforts on providing the benefits of the ESA to imperiled species most in need of protection. During the year, the Service also began a long awaited effort to improve ESA implementation.

Wolves continued to stir passions, and Ashe and the Service dealt with wolf issues throughout the year.

On August 2, the Service reached a historic agreement with Wyoming that paved the way for the removal of its wolves from the Endangered Species List, and the return of management to Wyoming. This followed agreements with Montana and Idaho. The removal of wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountain area from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife shows the stunning success of the wolf recovery effort. As an average, wolves have exceeded recovery goals for 12 consecutive years in the Northern Rocky Mountains.



TOM MACKENZIE / USFWS



LORI IVERSON / USFWS

Mike Jimenez, Wyoming Wolf Project Leader (right), led a hike to a wolf den site on the National Elk Refuge. After touring the den site, the group walked to the top of the ridge and observed several wolves from the Pinnacle Peak pack. Here, Jimenez howls to the wolves to initiate a response, as USFWS Director Dan Ashe (2nd from left) looks on.

Ashe captures a photo of a Laysan Albatross on the East Island during his recent visit to Midway Atoll NWR.

And it is especially important as the world population increases, surpassing 7 billion in Ashe’s first year.

A key focus in *Conserving the Future*, as well as in Ashe’s first year, is reaching out to underserved populations among those 7 billion. With more Americans living in cities, the Service has emphasized urban refuges. The *Conserving the Future* vision pledges to create a refuge presence in 10 demographically and geographically varied cities by 2015.

On December 21 the Service announced it was removing thriving wolf populations in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and in portions of adjoining states, from the list. Wolves total more than 4,000 in the three core recovery states in the western Great Lakes area and have exceeded recovery goals. Each state has developed a plan to manage wolves.

“The successful recovery of gray wolves is a testament to the hard work of the Service and our state and local partners,” Ashe says. “It is one of the greatest conservation success stories of our time.”

Wolves remain a controversial topic aligned with the ESA, and they’re not alone. In June 2012, the Service determined that the dunes sagebrush lizard does not warrant protection under the ESA. State-led voluntary conservation efforts in New Mexico and Texas led to conservation agreements to protect habitat and greatly reduce the impact of oil and gas development across 88 percent of the lizard’s habitat.

Throughout the country, the Service is using conservation agreements much more effectively to push forward conservation goals and build stronger partnerships with states, non-profit conservation groups and private sector companies like The Southern Company.

As Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar said at the time, the decision shows “we don’t have to choose between energy development and the protection of our land and wildlife—we can do both.”

Despite the focus on some high profile species like the wolf and lizard, the Service has begun facing conservation challenges on a landscape level. Realizing that many of the challenges, like climate change, ignore state, regional or even national boundaries, the Service is working with many partners in finding solutions that can work across a whole landscape and not just for one refuge or one region.

One of the most powerful efforts here is the development of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC). LCCs bring together state and federal agencies and other partners to share and improve scientific knowledge.

Working together, Ashe says, “will let all of us in the conservation world have a

strong positive impact on fish and wildlife—much stronger than we could hope to have acting alone.”

Through LCCs, the Service increases its work with partners. With conservation budgets being slashed, the Service relies on its partners—and vice versa—to achieve the biggest conservation benefit for the dollar invested. LCCs are also helping the Service improve its science capacity and become, as Ashe calls it, “science-driven.”

The emphasis on landscapes and partnerships was key to the January 18 establishment of the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. Like other new units of the refuge system, the Everglades Headwaters NWR represents a new conservation model for the Service. The Service is embracing locally supported, partnership-driven conservation efforts and working together with private landowners to conserve the land’s natural heritage.

That idea was also behind the Working Lands for Wildlife initiative announced March 1. The partnership between the Service and the Department of Agriculture’s NRCS will help maintain longstanding ranching, farming and forest management traditions found on working landscapes across the country, while addressing the needs of several declining wildlife species.

“Landscapes can work for people and wildlife at the same time—it is not all or nothing,” Ashe says.

March 23 saw another effort dedicated to the idea that conservation is not a zero-sum game between developers and conservationists. The Department of the Interior released Voluntary Wind Energy Guidelines designed to help wind energy project developers avoid and minimize impacts of land-based wind projects on wildlife and their habitats. The voluntary guidelines will help shape the siting, design and operation of the nation’s growing wind energy economy. Read about them at <fws.gov/windenergy>.

As the Service prepares itself for the future, its goal will remain what it has always been—the protection and restoration of our nation’s fish and wildlife heritage.



Dan interacts at Kaena Point on Oahu with students from the Service’s Student Temporary Employment Program.



Ashe speaks at the news conference announcing the creation of the 556th refuge, Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge at the FFA training facility near Hines City, DL, about 50 miles south of Orlando. Behind: Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, Rancher Bud Adams, Brian McPeck, chief operating officer, The Nature Conservancy, and Nick Wiley, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Ashe is guiding the Service to do that by asking it to embrace Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC). A first step in SHC is to identify biological outcomes, which will be linked to funding decisions and performance measures. He knows that this approach will probably be disruptive. “Change usually is,” he says. But he recalls what his dad told him about the Service—“they’re doers.”

“So I know that many people will have anxiety about their future roles and responsibilities,” Ashe says. “But I also know that we will proudly continue America’s wildlife legacy.” □

MATT TROTT, Office of Communications, Headquarters

parting shots



Service Director Dan Ashe, members of the Service Directorate and guests gathered at the Fallen Comrades Memorial Wall on May 2 at the National Conservation Training Center to commemorate the addition of a long-awaited statue that completes the memorial. The statue, by Eli Hopkins (far left), was designed to capture the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It depicts both human and natural elements, conveying the role of the Service employee as a watchful guardian of our nation's wildlife resources. Several plants and animals are artfully integrated into the statue, including the Tundra swan, the Goose Creek milk vetch, the Ivory-billed woodpecker and the Karner blue butterfly.

Fish & Wildlife News

Editor: Matthew Trott
Editorial advisor: Craig Rieben, Chief,
Internal Communications
Art director: Jane Pellicciotto, Allegro Design

Submit articles and photographs to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 332-A
Arlington, VA 22203
703/358-2512
Fax: 703/358 1930
E-mail: matthew_trott@fws.gov

Submission deadline:

Winter 2013: by October 14