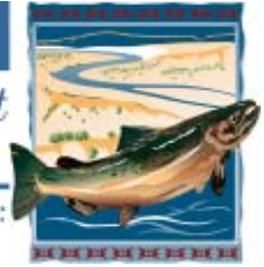


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge
... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.



December 17, 2004

Christmas Spirit Extends to Local Family

Staff at Hanford Reach National Monument recently opened up their hearts and pocketbooks to help a local family in need of Christmas blessings. The family, consisting of an expectant mom and four kids, was located through a county shelter program. A distributed wish list of items for each family member from 0 to 7 years old received an amazing response from Monument staff and our office partners at Science Applications International. Within one week, our conference room was bursting with donated bedding, household goods, diapers, clothes, books, and of course, toys galore.



Our conference room soon began to mimic Santa's workshop with wrapping paper, ribbons, bows and presents. Santa's elves were busy deciding who should receive which prized item, attaching labels and wrapping each gift with care for the festive occasion. When delivery day came, five pickup trucks were loaded to transport the cache of holiday cheer to the destination. In the end we feel that in some small way we have made Christmas, and everyday life, a little easier for a young family struggling through the hard times of today's world. We as a staff also benefited in knowing that for a short time, the thoughts and actions of giving outweighed the concerns of the day.



We also determined the answer to the age old question, "How many USFWS employees does it take to disassemble and reassemble a baby crib?" One Deputy Project Leader, one Refuge Operations Specialist, one Information and Education Specialist, a Lead Planner, one Law Enforcement Officer, and two Administrative Specialists. Now that is team work!