

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region Spring 2009 Dakotas Flood Response Recognition Ceremonies

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leadership recently recognized employees in the Mountain-Prairie Region (Region 6) and Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region (Region 3), who responded to the severe flooding in the Dakotas earlier this year.

At ceremonies at Denver, Colorado and Minot, North Dakota, members of the Service Directorate, including Steve Guertin, Regional Director (Region 6) and Greg Siekaniec, Assistant Director, National Wildlife Refuge System, acknowledged Service personnel and their swift, effective, and sustained flood response. A third ceremony is planned for Montana later this month to recognize responders from area refuges and other Service field stations who participated in the flood response mission.

During the flood disaster in North Dakota in Spring, 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provided both mutual aid to local law enforcement authorities and direct assistance to the State of North Dakota via a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mission assignment.

The Service is the largest federal entity within North Dakota and has many specialized and valuable resources stationed in and around the state, including airboats, which we deployed to great effect for search and rescue operations in areas flooded with water, ice, and snow. This capability allowed the Service to play a key role in assisting state, local and federal emergency response personnel during this historic flood disaster. Service emergency response efforts included search and rescue operations, sandbagging, and assistance with the demolition of ice jams on the Missouri River.

The floods in North Dakota and South Dakota also impacted numerous Service assets and interests, including numerous fee and easement units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, as well as private lands on which the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service is working to conserve wetlands and other habitat essential to the health and productivity of the Prairie Pothole Region of the Dakotas, known as America's "Duck Factory." Going forward, the Service will assess and address these impacts through repair and rebuilding of facilities and habitat restoration.



Steve Guertin, Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6, recognizes Rich Johnston, National Wildlife Refuge System Zone Law Enforcement Officer, for Rich's leadership and participation in the Service's 2009 Dakotas Flood Response Mission.

Credit: USFWS



Steve Guertin, Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6, presents Paul Van Ningen, Project Leader at Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge in North Dakota, with an award for Paul's efforts during the Service's 2009 Dakotas Flood Response Mission.

Credit: USFWS