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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

April 22, 2005

A photograph showing two firefighters in yellow protective gear and helmets walking through a field. In the foreground, there is a line of bright orange and yellow flames, likely from a prescribed burn. The background is a vast, flat landscape under a cloudy sky.

Inside This Issue:

Prescribed Burn Season Underway
Acting Director Visits Region
Sturgeon Return for First Time in 40 Years

Service and Bass Pro Shops Join Together to Highlight Missouri River Fish

Columbia Fishery Resources Office Fishery Biologists Corey Lee, Andy Starostka, Nick Frohnauer and Colby Wrasse, along with Andy Roberts of the Columbia Ecological Services Office and volunteer Cliff Wilson collected fish for an aquarium at a new Bass Pro Shop store in Columbia, Mo.

Bass Pro is a large retail store that specializes in fishing, hunting, and outdoor equipment. A central attraction in the store are the large aquariums -- viewed by thousands of people daily. The Columbia store will feature fishes of the Missouri River.

Species collected for the aquarium included shovelnose sturgeon, blue catfish, channel catfish, sauger, blue sucker, smallmouth buffalo, common carp and several others. Fish were caught from the Missouri River during sampling on the pallid sturgeon monitoring project and are representative of common native and exotic species of the Missouri River. Public aquariums are valuable educational tools which increase public aware-

ness and interest in fisheries and resource conservation.

“This outreach effort is an important part of the Service’s efforts to help inform the general public about fish -- and what the Service is doing for the fish of the Big Muddy,” said Wrasse.

Acting Director Visits

Matt Hogan made his first trip to Region 3 as the acting director during a visit to the Columbia area to help celebrate the partnership and attend the store’s grand opening ceremonies, Mar. 31

Hogan and Service staff from the Columbia area toured the Missouri River during the day and had the opportunity to see some of the work Service personnel are conducting along the river.

Hogan toured a habitat restoration site managed by the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and was also able to see U.S. Geologic Survey biologists implanting shovelnose sturgeon with transmitters and data tags for a large scale telemetry study. *Colby Wrasse, Columbia FRO*



- USFWS photo by Jane Ledwin

Acting Service Director Matt Hogan (kneeling on right) watches as a data tag is attached to a shovelnose sturgeon during a tour of the lower Missouri River.



- USFWS photo by Jane Ledwin

Acting Service Director Matt Hogan and Service staff from the Columbia area tour the Missouri River.

About the Cover



- USFWS Photo by Eric Earhart

One of several prescribed fires on private lands completed near Windom WMD with the assistance from the Service.

First Lake Sturgeon Season in 40 Years Opens on Legend Lake

A dream of several tribal elders came true on Feb. 5, 2005, when the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin opened their first regulated sturgeon fishery on Legend Lake. This is the first fishing season held on the lake since lake sturgeon were extirpated from it in the 1950s.

During the past decade, La Crosse Fishery Resources Office fishery biologists have been working with the Menominee Tribe, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Genoa National Fish Hatchery to restore lake sturgeon on the Menominee Indian Reservation located in northeastern Wisconsin. The team began stocking Legend Lake in 1994. Annual stocking rates and size of the fish stocked varied with availability.

A total of 56,000 lake sturgeon have been stocked through 2004.

The Menominee people once relied heavily on lake sturgeon as an important food source, and the importance of the lake sturgeon as a Menominee totem remains today. Sturgeon have been absent from the diet of Menominee Tribal members since the 1950s, with the exception of a small number of ceremonial fish provided to the tribe by the DNR each year since 1995.

The multi-agency team working to recover the sturgeon reviewed the assessment data they had collected from 2003 and 2004. Based on this data, the team decided the fishery had reached a point where it could support a proposal to open a limited fishery to tribal members. This was several years earlier than



- USFWS Photo by Ann Runstrom

Biologists from the tribe and other cooperating agencies assessed the lake sturgeon population and determined it had recovered enough to allow a fishing season.

anticipated.

Regulations for the season include gear restrictions to spears or hook and line and no use of artificial lights during the winter season. Participants were required to apply for a sturgeon tag, only one sturgeon per person is allowed and a maximum of 100 tags were issued. Harvested fish had to be registered with the Menominee Department of Conservation.

Since it had been more than 40 years since any tribal members had fished sturgeon on the lake, the Menominee Department of Conservation searched unsuccessfully for living elders that had experience harvesting lake sturgeon and could share their knowledge. Unfortunately, none were found.

The winter season was open from Feb. 5-20. No fish were successfully harvested.

Participants stated they used the season to learn the habits of the fish and best use of the gear. Hopes are high that the spring season, April 9-24, is more productive. *Ann Runstrom, LaCrosse FRO*

Hail & Farewell

Region 3 is a dynamic organization. Quality employees are continuously coming to the region or leaving for new challenges.

Each month, we will do our best to publish a list of new employees, as well as those who have retired. Names are provided by the Regional Human Resources Office.

This month, we welcome the following new permanent employees: **Nathan M. Merk**, Horicon NWR; **Michael W. Engel**, Madison PLO; and **David H. Jones**, Crab Orchard NWR.

We also welcome the following term, temporary and student employees: **Michael J. Brickley**, Regional Office - Engineering; **Nicholas F. Frohauer** and **Jeff M. Finley**, Columbia FRO; **Michael R. McKinley** and **Matthew J. Rinkkus**, Pendills Creek NFH; **Wells E. Adams**, Columbia FRO; **Adam R. Keiper**, Regional Sign Center; **James L. Borst**, Upper Mississippi River NWFR - Savanna District; **Lee M. Donahue**, Upper Mississippi River NWFR; **Ray L. Puroll**, **Brian C. Waters**, **Marilyn J. Barber**, **Peggy J. Botens**, **Michael J. Vincent**, **Daniel C. Ripley**, **Donald J. Peterson** and **Heather A. Kampf**, Jordan River NFH; and **Stephen T. Schummer** and **Bradly R. Bergman**, Seney NWR.

We also bid farewell and say thank you to the following retirees: **John W. Francis**, Rice Lake NWR, **Charles W. Shaiffer**, Mingo NWR; and, **Deanna Vilendrer**, Regional Office - Ecological Services.

Prescribed Burning Season Ignites Across Region

Returning birds and melting snow are sure signs of spring in the Midwest. Natural resources professionals are also preparing for another spring ritual, the start of the prescribed fire season.

From April 1 to mid-June, staff at the Leopold Wetland Management District in Portage, Wis., will be mobilizing crews of firefighters and equipment for scheduled burns at 30 Waterfowl Production Areas in 15 counties across south-central Wisconsin.

Service offices in the southern portion of the region began conducting prescribed burns earlier in the season and many more offices across the Midwest will also be conducting fires.

Safely managed fires are a common sight each spring at Service-managed national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts. Guided by the most current science, Service fire staff expertly employ fire to restore, enhance,

and protect ecosystem health according to Steve Lenz, district manager at Leopold WMD. "Prescribed fire is an essential and cost-effective tool for managing wildlife habitat," Lenz said. "Each burn is carefully planned and professionally executed."

Large areas of smoke are common sites during the prescribed burns. The Service encourages nearby residents to remember the role that fire plays in nature: removing accumulated flammable materials, providing habitat for wildlife and plants, and maintaining beautiful views.

Simulating historic, naturally occurring wildfires produce great benefits to native plants and animals. Burning the previous year's plant matter returns nutrients to the soil, encouraging healthier and more productive plant growth. Fire top-kills woody plants such as willow and oak, causing them to sprout from the base. The resulting shoots provide tender, nutritious browse for animals like

white-tailed deer. Fruit-bearing plants (like blueberry) are stressed by fire, signaling them to flower and fruit. Prescribed fire also reduces the hazards of wildfires.

Last year, the Leopold office staff successfully conducted burns on 15 of its WPA in seven Wisconsin counties for a total of 1,142 acres. "Those burns reduced the build-up of flammable invasive vegetation while improving habitat and reducing the chances of an uncontrolled wildland fire on those lands," said Lenz. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*



- USFWS Photo Minnesota Valley NWR

Fire specialist work together to plan and execute successful prescribed burns. It takes many trained individuals to manage a fire and ensure it is kept under control.



- Photo by Eric Earhart, Windom WMD

Prescribed fires can create a large amount of smoke and coordination with local agencies and residents -- to ensure they understand why the smoke is there -- is completed before burning.

One Swan's Journey

Each winter at the Wildwood Park and Zoo in Marshfield, Wis., Assistant Zookeeper Jeff Becker's daily routine includes tending to dozens of resident ducks, Canada geese, and swans that resist the urge to migrate and over winter on two aerated ponds that border the small municipal zoo. But this winter, one early December day was anything but routine. "I went up to our upper pond to tend to one of our two mute swans. When I got there, I looked up and here comes this big ol' trumpeter on to the pond," he said. "It was quite a surprise."

A trumpeter swan is not a tough bird to notice. Adults measure nearly four feet long with a wing span of nearly eight feet. The all-white trumpeter is larger than its cousins, the tundra and mute swans, and is easily identified by its broad black bill and distinctive loud, trumpet like call. Becker also noticed this particular swan was adorned with a red and white plastic neck band that identified the new arrival as "H99."

H99, a male, was hatched in 1999 near West Bend, Iowa, and was raised at the Swan Restoration Project, a captive breeding program operated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Non-Game Wildlife Program. In March 2000 the young swan received its red identifying neck band and was released to the wild. Over the next three years, H99 was sighted in Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas. Along the way, H99 had mated with a wild female trumpeter, and nested near Sleepy Eye, Minn. The pair eventually produced four cygnets. In late fall 2003 the family left the Midwest and ended up at the small town of Lockney, Texas, on Dec. 13, 2003.

A pheasant hunter was the next person to identify H99, and the bird was not in good shape. Floyd County (Texas) Game Warden Mark Collins was called to the scene near Lockney and discovered two dead and three wounded trumpeter swans. The birds had been shot by poachers and left to die. H99 had survived the shooting, but was badly wounded. His mate was nowhere to be found. Two of the cygnets were dead; the other two were in bad shape. H99 and his two injured cygnets were taken to the South Plains Rehabilitation Center in Lubbock, Texas.

"It was sad to see them so pep-

pered with buckshot," said Center Director Carol Lee. "We X-rayed the birds, medicated and treated them. It was hard work. It took at least two people to handle and treat each swan because of its large size. As we treated the cygnets, H99 would trumpet as if pleading with us to leave them alone. It was heart wrenching," recalled Lee. One of the cygnets was later euthanized due to its injuries.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department immediately offered a \$1,000 reward for the poachers. Nine days later, four individuals came forward and confessed to shooting the swans. The four were fined a total of \$17,000--\$500 for each swan shot plus veterinary expenses and court costs.

On Jan. 1, 2004, H99 and his surviving cygnet were transferred from Lubbock to Orphaned and Injured Wildlife Inc., a wildlife rehabilitation facility in Spirit Lake, Iowa. During their three month stay at the facility, the birds' wing fractures healed and a bone chip in H99's knee joint was surgically removed, allowing him to walk normally again. The cygnet also received its own red neck band from the Iowa DNR: 5C7. In the spring of 2004, the swans were released back to the wild.

H99 appeared to be content to spend the winter of 2004-2005 in the safe confines of the Wildwood Park and Zoo in Marshfield -- nowhere near Texas. Finally during the last week of March, H99 left the zoo and continued his journey.

If you see H99 or any other banded birds, they can be reported to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center via the Internet at: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/> or by telephone at 1-800-327-BAND. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*



- Photo courtesy Floyd County Hesperian-Beacon

Texas Game Warden Mark Collins holds H99 on the day the swan and his four cygnets were shot. H99's mate was never found.

Rock Island Field Office Helps Create Topeka Shiner Habitat in Iowa

The Topeka shiner is a small minnow-type fish that historically thrived in the prairie streams of the Midwest. As the prairies were tamed, so were the wildly meandering and dynamic streams that dissected them. As a result, the Topeka shiner and other fish that rely on ephemeral and perennial floodplain wetlands have declined markedly in population size and range. Due to these losses, the Topeka shiner was listed as an endangered species in 1998.

As one effort to help this species recover, the Rock Island Field Office funded the development and construction of two habitat restoration projects consisting of four floodplain wetland areas on two critical habitat streams in central Iowa. In addition, RIFO has established a working relationship and partnership with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to develop and construct future restoration projects on critical habitat streams of the North Raccoon River and Boone River watersheds.

Working with private landowners and the Heritage Fund, biologists identified oxbow wetland habitats that had been affected by accelerated sedimentation rates and isolated from the adjacent stream systems. Existing Service and Iowa DNR data indicate that Topeka shiners require ephemeral and perennial floodplain wetlands uniquely spaced within a watershed. The constructed projects are the beginning efforts to restore floodplain wetlands throughout the North Raccoon and Boone River watersheds. These restored wetlands may ultimately be a key step in the recovery of this endangered species within its Iowa distribution.

These projects will be used as demonstration sites to show other landowners in the watershed

how they can work with various partners to restore wetlands.

Floodplain wetlands in the form of pothole or meander scars — such as the ones created with this project — offer a variety of habitat for stream fish. Predominantly these habitats serve as spawning, rearing and foraging habitats and are only used seasonally. However, Topeka shiners may use these habitats for entire life cycle development. The nearly obligate spawning relationship with the orangespotted sunfish allows Topeka shiners to spawn with and use sunfish nests to aerate their eggs.

Topeka shiners also have the ability to survive in extremely low oxygen levels and ordinarily high water temperatures, which allows them to inhabit these wetlands annually.

These adaptations, with a little help from ground water discharge, give the shiner an edge in an otherwise hectic environment.

The benefits of this project do not end with the Topeka shiner.

Ephemeral wetlands produce abundant quantities of food for amphibians, reptiles, and migrating birds, especially waterfowl.

Even small sites, much less than an acre, can produce hundreds of frogs, toads and salamanders. These wetlands will provide habitat for the endangered Topeka shiner and other fish of the adjacent streams, as well as for reptiles, amphibians and birds with similar habitat requirements. *Kraig McPeck, Rock Island Field Office*



- USFWS photos by Kraig McPeck

The project site before (top) and after (bottom) construction. Small pothole wetlands can provide seasonal or permanent habitat for Topeka shiners and many other fish, reptiles, amphibians and birds.

Around the Region

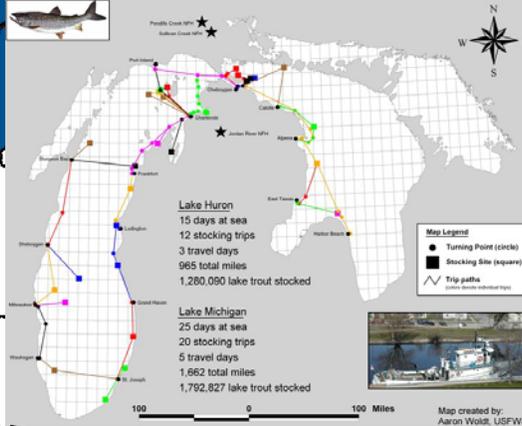


- USFWS photo by Glenn Miller

Northland College Student Becca Schoon helps Ashland FRO staff register a lake sturgeon during the Lake Winnebago spearing season.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

USFWS 2004 Lake Trout Stocking Operations



Alpena FRO Fishery Biologist Aaron Woldt developed a map and poster highlighting the lake trout stocking accomplishments of the M/V Togue during 2004. The vessel traveled 2,627 miles and stocked 3,072,917 fish.

LaCrosse FHC Microbiologist Ken Phillips performs a health assessment on pallid sturgeon being raised at Neosho NFH.

- USFWS photo



- USFWS photo

Horicon NWR Biologist Shawn Papon holds a largemouth bass collected during a fishery survey at Fox River NWR.



- USFWS photo

Illinois River NWFR Complex Private Lands Biologist Gwen Kolb talks to a group of students about raptors during a program held at the refuge.



- USFWS photo

Columbia area Service employees, along with Acting Service Director Matt Hogan (far right), watch as radio transmitters are implanted in shovelnose sturgeon during a tour of the Missouri River.

Early Guidance Can Help Biologists Find Their Path

By Tameka Dandridge, East Lansing Field Office

In January, I attended and participated in a program at the University of Michigan in honor of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday called “Conservation in Black and White,” which focused on racial and gender diversity in environmental and conservation related careers and the importance of mentorship. One of the opportunities discussed during the day included an environmental education and leadership program called Earth Tomorrow. Earth Tomorrow is run by the National Wildlife Federation and teaches students the importance of environmental stewardship by motivating teenagers to improve their local environment through service projects.

Like many Earth Tomorrow students that attended the Conservation Program, I often thought I was the only one in my high school crowd interested in a natural resource. Back then, I never used, or was familiar with, the term “natural resources.” Nevertheless, what I did know was that I was very fascinated with the natural world, specifically animal behavior and how and what animals need to survive. I knew I wanted to be like the biologists I watched every week on the National Geographic programs. I also had another interest – the FBI. But, I had no guidance or mentors to encourage my interests. Had I heard of environmental or conservation related careers at an earlier age, my path to become a wildlife biologist would have likely been more direct.

When I began my freshman year in college I was undecided as what to major in, but I was leaning towards some type of science/animal related major but really did not know where to start. During my second year, I

browsed through the course description book (I must have skipped over Fisheries and Wildlife, which is what I should have majored in) and stopped at Zoology. “This is it,” I thought. Four years later, I graduated with a B.S. in Zoology.

Approximately one year after graduating, I began working for the Detroit Zoo, first as a zoo education assistant and then zookeeper. Although, I loved being in the company of animals, I did not like being a zookeeper. The work was often unchallenging and monotonous. I soon became very bored with my job.

After a few years as a zookeeper, I decided to fulfill my other career option – law enforcement; not the FBI, but the Michigan State Police. Working for the MSP was a great experience and very challenging, both mentally and physically. The MSP Academy made me a more positive person and instilled in me a “can do” attitude.

As it turned out, the MSP did not work out for me. I was working in the State of Michigan government complex in Lansing, Mich., when I learned about the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and that they were hiring wildlife biologists. I applied, but was rejected due to lack of wildlife management experience. The next day I contacted Michigan State University Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Here is where I realized that I should have majored in Fisheries and Wildlife instead of Zoology.

At the college I spoke with my future graduate advisor, who also became my mentor. She advised me to apply for an internship and enroll in



East Lansing Field Office Biologist Tameka Dandridge is helping to ensure the next generation of biologists know about natural resource opportunities.

some post-bachelor courses in wildlife management to get a basic understanding of wildlife management.

I was hired for an internship in the summer of 1999. It was one of the best summers I ever had. Because of the internship and the wildlife management courses, there was now no confusion as to “what I wanted to be when I grew up.” I wanted to be a wildlife biologist and I would become a wildlife biologist.

While taking post-bachelor courses, my mentor asked me if I would be interested in participating in a minority co-op program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the East Lansing Field Office. I was not familiar with the Service, but I said yes to the offer anyway. The Service introduced me to the policy and regulatory side of wildlife management, which I found very interesting. Upon being accepted in the graduate program in Fisheries and Wildlife, I became a SCEP student at the East Lansing Office, which allowed me to become more involved in endangered species issues. I have completed graduate school and am now a wildlife biologist.

Although the course I took was not direct, I was eventually pointed in the right direction.

Accomplishment Reports

The following accomplishments reports were processed between Feb. 15 and Mar. 15, 2005:

1. **Audio Conference: A Perspective on Reasonable Accommodation**, Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)
2. **Prescribe Burns - Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge**, Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR
3. **Career Advice Provided to Local Students**, Christopher Mensing, East Lansing FO
4. **Ashland FRO 2004 Annual Report Is Now On The Internet**, Frank Stone, Ashland FRO
5. **Service Participates in Commercial Dredging Conference**, Joyce Collins, Marion Illinois FO
6. **Cold and Ice Wreak Havoc at Sullivan Creek Hatchery**, JAMES ANDERSON, Sullivan's Creek NFH
7. **Future Lake Trout Broodstock Come Out and Say Hi!!!**, JAMES ANDERSON, Sullivan's Creek NFH
8. **Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge Earns Top Scores For Visitor Satisfaction**, Scott Flaherty, External Affairs
9. **Corps Coordinates Dredging Activities with Resource Agencies**, Kenneth Lammers, Reynoldsburg FO
10. **Service Seeks Public Comment on a Draft CCP for Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge**, Scott Flaherty, External Affairs
11. **Twin Cities Field Office Designs Water Release Solution on the Iron Range in Minnesota**, Paul Burke, Twin Cities FO
12. **Joint Fishery Assessment Steering Committee Held at Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission**, Frank Stone, Ashland FRO
13. **Sherburne Refuge Honors 619 Volunteers at Recognition Dinner**, Nancy Haugen, Sherburne NWR
14. **The Pike River Dam Removal and Stream Restoration Project**, Art Kitchen, Wisconsin Private Lands Ofc
15. **Service Staff Across the Red River Basin Chip In To Help Partner**, Mark Chase, Detroit Lakes WMD
16. **Fishery Biologist - A Career Worth Considering**, Mark Steingraeber, LaCrosse FRO
17. **Wisconsin Wetland Association Wetland Science Forum**, Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO
18. **EEOC Judge Provides Training for Refuge Project Leaders**, Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)
19. **Local Third Graders Learn About Tallgrass Prairie**, Rebecca Rasmussen, Union Slough NWR
20. **Students Learn Destructive Impacts Of Alien Species**, Katherine Mullett, Marquette Bio Station
21. **Snowmobilers Overrun Pendills Creek Hatchery**, Crystal LeGault-Anderson, Pendills Creek NFH
22. **Partners Come Together to Improve Fishing at Crab Orchard Lake**, Greg Conover, Carterville FRO
23. **Minnesota's Special Flora Presentation at Minnesota Science Museum**, Carlita Payne, Ecological Services
24. **Sturgeon Tagging Database in Progress**, Adam Kowalski, Alpena FRO
25. **La Crosse Fishery Office Recognizes Individuals at Annual Volunteer Banquet**, Heidi Keuler, LaCrosse FRO
26. **Fourth Graders Spend A Day In The Woods**, Mark Chase, Detroit Lakes WMD
27. **Columbia Fishery Office Collects Missouri River Fish to Help Educate Public**, colby wrasse, Carterville FRO
28. **Experimental Lake Whitefish Survey Gill Net Repairs**, Scott Koproski, Alpena FRO
29. **Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Recognizes Volunteers**, Mark Chase, Detroit Lakes WMD
30. **Service Biologist Speaks at Alpena Community College Career Pathway Night**, Aaron Woltdt, Alpena FRO
31. **Review of Lake Huron Double Crested Cormorant Management**, Jerry McClain, Alpena FRO
32. **Career Days - Northwest Missouri State University**, Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR
33. **Service Maps 2004 Stocking Trips of M/V Togue**, Aaron Woltdt, Alpena FRO
34. **SCEP Graduate Returns to Columbia Fishery Resources Office**, Jeff Finley, Columbia FRO
35. **DCR Sponsors EEO Training for FWS and Other Agencies**, Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)
36. **New Pony Express Birding Trail Established in Northwest Missouri**, Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR
37. **Genoa National Fish Hatchery Host Annual Mussel Cage Build Off**, Tony Brady, Genoa NFH
38. **Sea Lamprey Management Program Display Delights Duluth Denizens**, Terry Morse, Marquette Bio Station
39. **Columbia Fishery Office Welcomes New Fishery Biologist**, Nicholas Frohnauer, Columbia FRO
40. **La Crosse Fishery Office Helps with Annual Ice Fishing Clinic**, Heidi Keuler, LaCrosse FRO
41. **The Amazing Story of Trumpeter Swan H99**, Scott Flaherty, External Affairs
42. **Region 3 Fisheries Project Leaders/ Administrative Technician Meeting held in Onalaska, Wisconsin**, Richard Nelson, LaCrosse Fish Health Center
43. **Diet Analysis Completed on Eurasian Ruffe Captured From Lake Trout Spawning Reefs**, Gary Czapinski, Ashland FRO
44. **IntraService Section 7 Completed for Pesticide Use Proposals**, Joyce Collins, Marion Illinois FO
45. **Learning for Life program**, Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR
46. **Columbia Fishery Office Technician Presents Master's Proposal**, Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO
47. **Toxicology class learns about contaminants issues in the Detroit River**, Lisa Williams, East Lansing FO
48. **Job Shadowing Allows Students an Opportunity to Learn About Careers in Fisheries**, Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO
49. **Partners Program at Alpena Fishery Office Ranks 2005 Projects**, Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO
50. **Diversity**, Laurie Gucinski, Iron River NFH
51. **Continuation of Habitat Assessment Implementation for Missouri River Shallow Water Habitat Projects**, Wyatt Doyle, Columbia FRO
52. **Pallid Sturgeon Health Assessment at Neosho Hatchery**, Kenneth Phillips, LaCrosse Fish Health Center
53. **Getting a Closer Look at What's Going Through a Fish's Head**, Steve Redman, Iron River NFH
54. **Mississippi River Basin Sturgeon Tagging Database Planned**, Andrew Starostka, Columbia FRO
55. **Northland College Students and Ashland Fishery Office Staff Help Collect Sturgeon Data**, Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO
56. **Strengthening the Service's National Triploid Grass Carp Inspection and Certification Program**, Greg Conover, Carterville FRO
57. **Fish and Wildlife Service Booth Stands Out at the La Crosse Sports Show**, Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO
58. **Alpena Fishery Office Staff Participate at Sprinkler Lake WinterFest**, Susan Wells, Alpena FRO
59. **Carterville Fishery Office Participates in AFS Southern Division Session on Asian Carp**, Greg Conover, Carterville FRO
60. **Wolf River - Lake Winnebago System Sturgeon Spawning Long-Term Health Sampling**, Dave Wedan, LaCrosse FRO
61. **Event Held in Recognition of Local Junior Duck Stamp Artists**, Durinda Hulett, Illinois River NWR
62. **Annual Missouri Natural Resources Conference**, Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO
63. **Regional and Washington Offices Recognize Menominee Tribal Biologist**, Ann Runstrom, LaCrosse FRO
64. **Menominee Tribe Opens First Sturgeon Season in More Than 40 Years**, Ann Runstrom, LaCrosse FRO
65. **Section 7 Consultation Completed for New Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Fire Management Plan**, Elizabeth McCloskey, Northern Indiana ES Sub Ofc
66. **Community Member Rallies in Washington, DC to Conserve Fish and Wildlife**, Heidi Keuler, LaCrosse FRO
67. **Technical Assistance Provided to Shawnee National Forest for Natural Areas Management**, Joyce Collins, Marion Illinois FO
68. **Manager Bell Presents Program to State Wildlife Division**, Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR
69. **Missouri Natural Resources Conference 2005 Student Job Fair**, Corey Lee, Columbia FRO
70. **Draft Biological Assessment for Operation and Maintenance of the Ohio River Navigation System**, Joyce Collins, Marion Illinois FO
71. **East Lansing ES Staff Attend Symposium on the Winterring Ecology and Conservation of Piping Plovers**, Jack Dingleline, East Lansing FO
72. **New Backup Power Supply Earns a Save**, Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH
73. **Fishery Management Reports Completed for Horicon and Fox River NWR**, Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO
74. **Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands: 10th Annual Wetland Science Forum**, Catherine Carnes, Green Bay FO
75. **Two Wins for the Environment**, Elizabeth McCloskey, Northern Indiana ES Sub Ofc
76. **AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN!**, Angela Baran, Iron River NFH
77. **Twenty People Brave Frigid Temps to Go on Winter Night Hike at Shiawassee Refuge**, Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR
78. **Joint Venture Staffs Have a Joint Venture**, Gregory Soulliere, East Lansing FO
79. **Aquatic Nuisance Species Discussed with Producers at National Aquaculture Association Meeting**, Greg Conover, Carterville FRO
80. **Silver Creek Fish Passage Project Meeting**, Susan Wells, Alpena FRO
81. **Service Presents Results of Lake Huron Lake Trout Movement Study at LHTC Meeting**, Aaron Woltdt, Alpena FRO

Diner

Families sit down and dine together. It's a tradition, and it's part of what holds families together. This past month I was invited to dine with some of the Region 3 family, and it was delightful.

Sherburne NWR isn't far from the Regional Office, and I was long overdue for a visit when I finally arrived there in late February. A fresh snow coated trees and open spaces and the tour was inspiring as well as informative. At lunch-time the staff plus some Refuge Friends gathered at a long table for helpings of Anne Sittauer's stuffed pasta shells and other potluck fare. Jeanne, Greg, Tom, Sally, Nancy and the rest of the Sherburne team generously contributed food and gave up their lunch break to "break bread" with me, tell me a bit about themselves, and share their love of Sherburne. Talking over the table is a great way to get to know people and learn things, and added immensely to my visit.

I dined with the Fisheries Project Leaders in February when they met in LaCrosse. In addition to the PLs, the gathering included Administrative Officers, and several RO folks that came to LaCrosse to make presentations at the meeting, so quite a crowd had gathered by the time I arrived for dinner (at a seafood restaurant, of course). Because I was late and they had been socializing for awhile it seemed a bit more like "frat house" than "family!" They were a spirited crowd! I had a fine evening sharing food and beverage with Henry, Lyn, Terry, Dale, Scott, Denny, Laurie, Ann, Gary, Dave, Rod, Aaron, Deb, and more. I had visited most of them at their field stations, and it was wonderful to see all of them in one place at one



- USFWS photo by Scott Flaherty

RD Thorson had the opportunity to spend time dining with (and even serving) Region 3 staff over the past few months.

time. We had a good time laughing and visiting, and the good will carried over into the next day's meeting, with smiles and laughter in abundance.

A few weeks later the Refuge Project Leaders came to the Twin Cities and I had the pleasure of their good company for an evening. Like the meals with Sherburne and Fisheries, Refuge folks bring gusto to a social event, and because there were so many of them our dinner together was lively and fun, with plenty of people to visit. I'm not sure what the decibel level was but above the din I chatted with Alice, John, Barbara, Dick, Larry, Patti, Tom, Donna, Kathleen, Mark, Vickie, and others in this wonderful crowd. I also gained a new appreciation for the multiple talents of Jim Leach, Steve Delehanty and Scott Glup as I watched them ably

wash dishes! I heard that the Refuges meeting agenda was great, but I think it added immeasurably to the success of the gathering to have time set aside to visit, especially over a meal.

I never expect Region 3 folks to expend their own time and effort at meals when I am visiting or attending a meeting, but when we do sit down to eat together I treasure your good company and good conversation (as well as the good food). It's fun to visit informally and it helps us talk about things, get to know one another, and listen. For me these dinners with you are more than a meal. Like sitting down at the table with family, these meals nourish my spirit. Delicious!

**- Regional Director
Robyn Thorson**