



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

January 2010

On Watch for a New Year's Hidden Potential



USFWS Photo by Gary J. Wege, TCFO.

Editor's Note:

Connecting with nature does not look the same for everyone. Connecting with nature means different things to different people. For some, it's hunting and fishing. For others, it's walking in the woods or on the beach. What does your nature encounter look like? We want to know. To that end, we have added a regular section called Let's Go Outside!

We invite you to submit personal nature encounters as experienced by you and your children, as well as innovative ideas on how to connect with nature. We will run your accounts in this feature segment.

Please submit your youngsters' stories and photos to our regular section: Kid's Corner. Kid's Corner features the nature writing and photographic pieces by the children of regional employees.

E-mail: valerie_redmond@fws.gov with your Let's Go Outside! and Kids Corner articles, photos, journal entries and poems.

On the Cover:

USFWS Photo by Gary J. Wege, TCFO.

Departments

The Buzz /4

RD's Corner /3

Around the Region / 13

Features



Happy New Year / 3

The RD looks ahead.

By Tom Melius



Climate Change at Copenhagen / 5

Secretary Salazar's keynote address excerpted.



Behind the Desk and Beyond / 8

Carolyn Gregory's duties move well beyond from behind a desk.

By Valerie Rose Redmond



Hiawatha Line/ 11

Light rail connects urban dwellers to refuge

By Valerie Rose Redmond

Happy New Year

Happy New Year to all of you!

I hope that you have enjoyed your holidays and that you are now full of energy and ready for the challenge filled year that we have ahead of us.

The beginning of the year is a great opportunity to revisit our vision, to contemplate pending issues and to re-emphasize the importance of our personal safety as we perform our jobs, as well as that of our many volunteers and visitors.

From its inception, our mission "to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people," has been a challenging one. As

climate change factors in, it has complicated and intensified our efforts even more. Our vision and response then must be a global one LCC.

Last year we launched Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). With the Plains and Prairie Potholes Landscape Conservation Cooperative as our first priority, we will move forward with Region 6 on this and then follow up with the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes.

As I look ahead, I am optimistic. It is true that trying to predict and respond to a changing climate is a formidable challenge, but if history is any indication, creative solutions will prevail. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

As we move forward to meet the many challenges ahead, I will take this opportunity to ask you



to please have safety first in mind. In the coming months we will be entering another field season and we will again begin our prescribed burns.

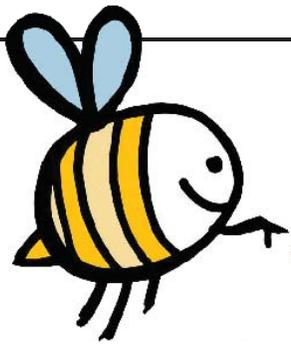
Our work is important, but even more important is to remember that safety comes first. Please take the necessary precautions so as not to endanger yourself or others. Be sure to follow safety regulations and protocols as you continue to make a difference on the landscape, in the environment and with the wildlife that inhabits it.

Happy New Year to you and your family.

*--Tom Melius
Regional Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Midwest Region*



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius (center), joined members of the Twin Cities Field Office in a search for freshwater mussels in Minnesota this fall. USFWS Photo.



Midwest Region Office of Law Enforcement's Silent Auction raises \$1121.40 for Second Harvest!

As the Upper Midwest's largest hunger-relief organization, Second Harvest Heartland will maximize each dollar provided into more than \$9 worth of distributed grocery products. They report that low-income families in Minnesota alone miss 125 million meals every year, a staggering number in and of itself, but then consider that this figure is drawn from 2007 data - well before the waves of layoffs happening all around us. In 2009, they anticipate distributing a total of 50 million pounds of food (up from 41 million in 2008), while serving more than 960 food shelves, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, senior programs and children's after-school programs.

If you helped with the 2009 Silent Auction - by donating, bidding, purchasing, assisting with set up or take down -- please know how grateful we are for your partnership. We could never do it alone, and you are what truly makes the difference in this event.

This was our ninth year of silent auction sponsorship. Please join with us again next year as we continue the tradition of raising money in support of others in need.

The Office of Law Enforcement

Endangered Whooping Crane Found Shot

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) offered a \$2,500 reward for information on the shooting. Wildlife law enforcement agents with the Service and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are investigating the shooting of an endangered whooping crane near the town of Cayuga in central Vermillion County, Ind. The crane was shot sometime between Saturday, November 28, when it was observed by an International Crane Foundation staff member, and Tuesday, Dec. 1, when an ICF volunteer found the carcass along West County Road 310 North, just west of North County Road 225 West.

--*External Affairs*

Annual Fish Health Inspection

On Oct. 24, the La Crosse Fish Health Center was in for its annual fish health inspection of our facility. The Fish Health Center is always a class act and we really enjoy working with the staff. This was the second of two routine inspections received during year. Samples from both the rainbow trout, as well as the endangered pallid sturgeon were taken.

--*David Hendrix, R3-Neosho NFH*



Above: Park Ranger Kara Zwickey takes a photo of a 700 year-old storage pit from the Oneota Culture. USFWS Photo.

Excavating into the Past

The Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge has contracted with the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center (MVAC) to monitor cultural resources on the site of the new visitor center and office facilities located near La Crosse, Wis.

An earlier on-site archaeological investigation by Region 3 archaeologist, David Kluth, recommended further steps to protect and properly excavate any cultural resources that might be encountered.

MVAC archaeologist, Wendy Holtz-Leith stated, "A bulldozer is used to remove the first 1.5 feet of soil followed by hand excavating. Fortunately we haven't found any significant discoveries."

All this effort is a precursor to implementing an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project.

--*Cynthia Samples*
R3-UMRNV&FR-Complex HQ

Climate Change @ Copenhagen

On Thursday, December 10, 2009, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar delivered keynote remarks at the COP-15 Climate Negotiations Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The following is excerpted from Secretary Salazar's address:

Since January, we at the Department of the Interior have built a coordinated strategy for managing the impacts of climate change on our land, water, marine, fish and wildlife, cultural heritage and tribal resources.

We recognize that effects of climate change aren't limited to any one national park, wildlife refuge, or Indian reservation – they are felt over broad landscapes. Entire wildlife corridors are changing. Shifting precipitation patterns are being felt up and down the seven-state Colorado River basin. And rising sea levels are affecting communities along all coasts. That's why the Department of the Interior's climate change adaptation strategy is organized around landscape-scale partnerships.

Eight DOI Climate Change Response Centers will synthesize existing climate change impact data and management strategies, help resource managers put them into action on the ground, and engage the public through education initiatives. And across the United States, we are standing up a network

of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives that – together with other federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public - will craft practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate change impacts. Working with Climate Change Response Centers, the cooperatives will focus on impacts that typically extend beyond the borders of any single National Wildlife Refuge, BLM unit, or National Park, including invasive species, fire, drought, wildlife, and changing water supplies. We know that no one government or no one landowner alone can solve these problems. We have to work beyond man-made borders and political jurisdictions.

The same is true for protected areas. The planet has around 100,000 areas - covering approximately 12 percent of the world's landmass - that protect much of our world's natural heritage. There is a growing awareness around the world that these wild lands are indispensable in the battle against the impacts of climate change. They form the backbone of our efforts to preserve the world's biodiversity and play vital roles in carbon storage, clean water, and endangered species preservation.

We can't afford to let these lands disappear. Through the use of landscape and seascape-level conservation initiatives, we will strengthen the connectivity and resiliency of our parks and protected areas and the wildlife



and ecosystem services they support. These efforts will prove critical. We have come a long way in the last year. Across America, the seeds of the clean energy economy have been sown in the soils of our lands, the minds of our engineers, and the imagination of our citizens.

They are the seeds of an American renewal that – by the end of next year – will spring to life: new solar plants under construction in the desert; new wind turbines spinning over the prairies; new tools and technologies being deployed across the world. Each new project completed and job created will propel us to the front edge of the world's most exciting and most important growth industry.

Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Workshop Instills Hunting Ethic in Students

Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow Workshop

Today, approximately 50 percent of students graduating with a wildlife degree have never hunted and know little about the reasons why people hunt or the impact and benefits that hunting and hunters provide to wildlife management and other conservation programs. If this next generation of natural resource professionals does not understand the roles, values, motivations and satisfactions derived from hunting, they will be unprepared to manage wildlife effectively.

The Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow (CLfT) Program focuses on wildlife and biology students who were raised in urban environments and never exposed to hunting.

The Program provides these students with the opportunity to understand the sport as a valid management tool, as a recreational activity with a

social and historical basis, and as a self-fulfilling pursuit.

Jane West, Midwest Region's Chief of Migratory Bird Management, represents the Fish and Wildlife Service as an instructor for the CLfT Workshops in the Midwest.

Sixteen students attended the November 2009 workshop at the Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation in Illinois. The students came from Iowa State, Purdue, Missouri State, the University of Michigan

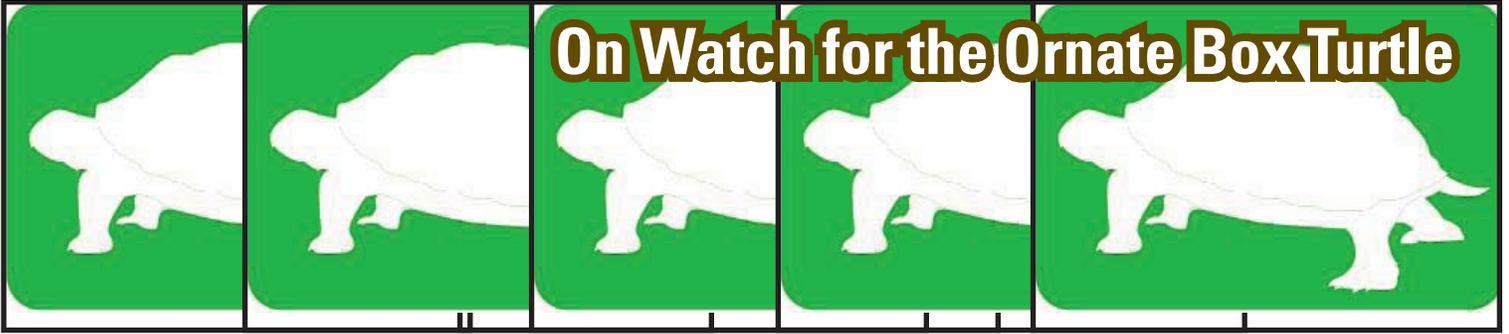


and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. The instructors, in addition to Jane, were from the Wildlife Management Institute, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation, State DNRs, the Universities of Michigan and Wisconsin – Madison, as well as Brigham Young. Iowa State, Purdue Universities. The program also attracted a University of Wisconsin freelance writer.

-- Jane West
Migratory Birds, RO

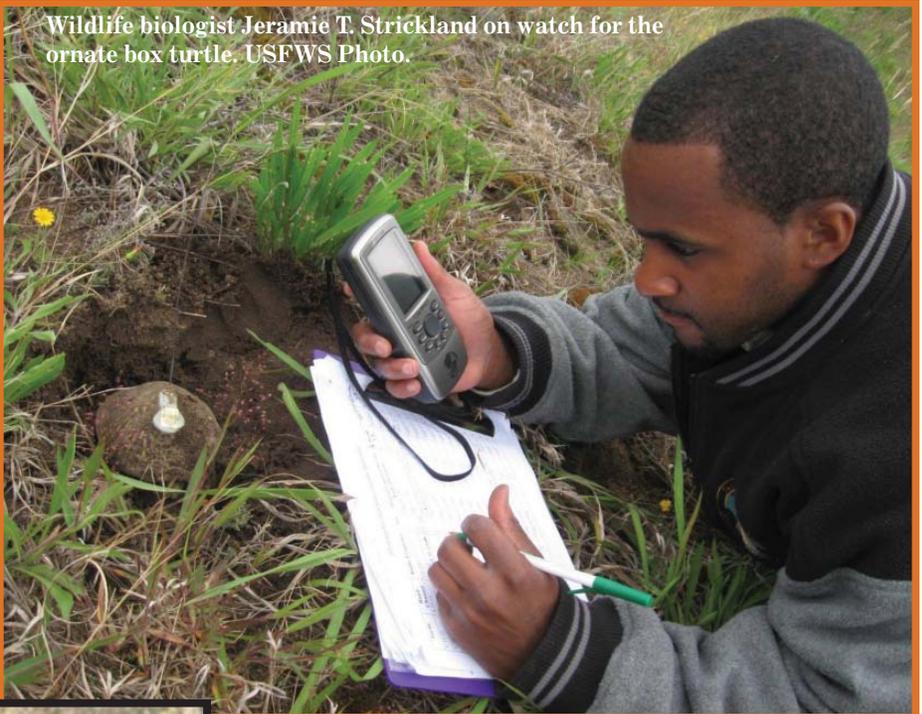
Left: Kyle Daly, a graduate student at the University of Michigan, attended the November CLfT workshop. As an undergraduate student, Kyle participated as an intern at Tamarac and Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuges. USFWS Photo.

On Watch for the Ornate Box Turtle

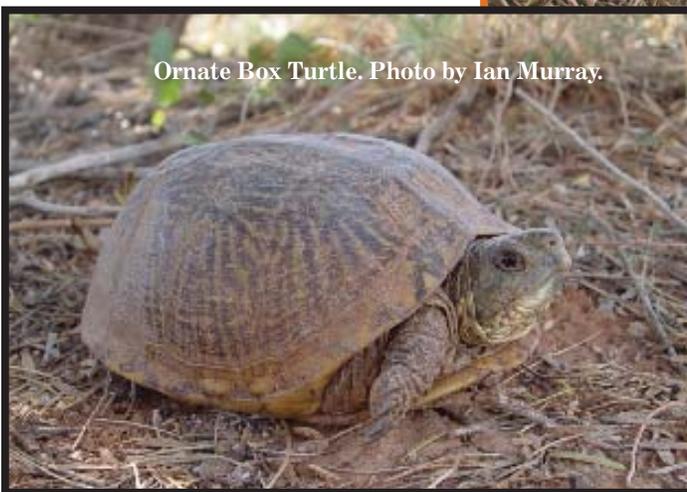


Wildlife Biologist Jeramie T. Strickland is on watch for the ornate box turtle. He is managing a headstart nesting biology, conservation, and population recovery project of the federally listed (threatened) ornate box turtle. He works with private land owners, organizations, local communities, and corporations to help restore wetlands, grasslands, and sand prairies, which are declining at alarming rates.

The ornate box turtle was listed as a threatened species in Illinois in October. Their decline was primarily attributed to the loss of habitat where 99 percent of the original prairies have



Wildlife biologist Jeramie T. Strickland on watch for the ornate box turtle. USFWS Photo.



Ornate Box Turtle. Photo by Ian Murray.

been destroyed in the state. Northwest Illinois has a few scattered sand prairies that have small populations of ornate box turtles that are imperiled due to their isolation. This project will collect information and provide

management guidelines for the conservation of box turtle populations at seven sand prairies. Five of the sites are within the National Wildlife Refuge System and two are within the Illinois Nature Preserves System. These seven sites are located within a 25 mile radius and represent the largest sand prairie areas in northwest Illinois that are under state and federal protection.

This project will provide important information on the ornate box

turtle that could be used in the State Recovery Plan for this species.

A secondary goal of this project is to determine the feasibility of re-establishing a viable population of ornate box turtles at the Lost Mound Sand Prairie. Historically, ornates existed at this closed military installation but decades of military activity combined with extensive over-grazing by cattle eliminated all but a few individuals. The vast sand prairie at Lost Mound provides ideal habitat for repatriating this species and could potentially become the largest protected population of ornates in Illinois.

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs

Behind the Desk and Beyond

As an Administrative Technician at Great River and Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs), Carolyn Gregory's duties move well beyond from behind a desk. When it comes to furthering the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), Gregory's job does entail the typical aspects of administrative work at a refuge such as, tracking the refuge budget, greeting visitors, and processing purchases, payments, travel vouchers and payroll, but it also includes plenty of outreach. Earlier this year Clarence Cannon NWR hosted Teacher Career Day, an organized event designed to bring together teachers and counselors to learn about the myriad of careers available in natural resources. Gregory gave the audience a presentation on her job responsibilities and the pathway to her career at the Service, which

Below: Carolyn assisting with avian bird flu testing. USFWS Photo.



Carolyn with the fawns that she rescued during a flood. USFWS Photo.

began in 1981. After studying business occupations at Pike-Lincoln Technical Center in Eolia, Missouri, she joined the Service family, as a clerk typist. "One of the best things about my job is that no two days are ever the same. Work priorities change and this means different tasks on different days. This keeps it interesting!" she says.

Gregory was also a major player in the renovation of the new office headquarters building at the refuge. In addition to the procurement expenditure tracking, she helped choose many of the colors, options, and facets of the new building. "Carolyn is the face of Clarence Cannon and Great River NWR's. When visitors come in the office, she is their first, and often only, contact with FWS employees" says her supervisor, Jason Wilson.

Gregory also succeeded in refuge fire dispatch, one of several details she worked including some in the Service's Washington Office. Once during a flood, she rescued two stranded fawns and took them to her personal home for care. "I enjoy assisting with environmental education at the refuge. We had a group of 75 first graders come visit this fall and it was very rewarding when one child said, "This is the best day of my life!"

Continued on page 9.

Behind the Desk and Beyond

Below: Carolyn Gregory assists visitors at the 2003 “Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair”. USFWS Photo.



A desk boundary is a foreign concept for Gregory. She is clearly connected to the land, as evidenced by her many activities. “When I look out my office window or take a drive on the refuge and see over 100,000 ducks, Canada and snow geese, and numerous bald eagles during the fall, I am reminded of why my job is important,” she says. --Valerie Rose Redmond, *External Affairs*

Born in Troy, Missouri, Gregory’s passion for the natural world is fueled by her upbringing. She was raised on a farm and has spent her entire married life on a farm. “I have always enjoyed living in the country”, she says. “When I grew up we always had chores to do outside.” She was also a Brownie and Girl Scout and her mother served as a leader.

When Gregory heard about a job opening at the Service, she says she knew it was the right fit—administrative type work in a rural setting.

Gregory says she can actually say her job is more than a job. It is a very real part of her life. “I like working for a small agency as it seems like no matter where you travel,” she says, “you always meet someone who knows someone you know. It really is like a big family. There are so many good employees who work for the Service--people who take pride in what they do for the greater mission of the agency.”



Carolyn in her youth as a Girl Scout. Photo courtesy of Carolyn Gregory.

Caring Tree Initiative

The Caring Tree Initiative contributes (at least) 100 “large” gifts to children receiving support by the Hennepin County Shelter Child Services Program. The children being sponsored by the initiative have been removed from their homes for their health and safety, and are typically under temporary foster care until a permanent home can be found for them (although some children continue to receive social services even after placement in permanent foster homes). The people who are caring for the children we are sponsoring have very limited financial resources, and probably will not be able to afford to buy any holiday presents. The only presents that most of those children will receive will be delivered by regional employees who contribute to the initiative. Last year the regional office sponsored about 100 children. Caring Tree is organized and facilitated by regional employee, Michael Hoff of the Fisheries program.

Blue Goose Coins Ready to Migrate to Your Refuge

Here's a way to connect people with nature using technology.

Wikipedia defines geocaching as an outdoor activity in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers (called "geocaches" or "caches") anywhere in the world. A typical cache is a small waterproof container (usually a tupperware or ammo box) containing a logbook. Larger containers can also contain items for trading, usually toys or trinkets

Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge last March. The event, dubbed Curing Cabin Fever Geocaching, featured the following:

- A meet and greet - fellowship gathering of a group of geocachers..
- GPS basics teaching session.
- Geocaching 101 class.
- A travel bug trading station.

A travel bug is small tag that is attached to an item. The tag has a unique tracking number that allows it to be tracked on the website geocaching.com. This item then is carried from one

geocache to another by

Wildlife Refuge in every state. Take a picture of you and me in front of the refuge sign, and then place me in a geocache near the refuge. After my mission is completed, I want to migrate back to the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge where I was hatched."

Finding the hidden treasure or geocache is the main purpose of geocaching so each event must have geocaches. At the refuge we place day caches for our event. These are only out for the day of the event. In addition, we provide a listing with coordinates to geocaches in the area. We also provide a laptop for downloading geocaches to the participants' GPS units.

One of the geocoins ready to "migrate" to a refuge near you. USFWS Photo.



of little value. Geocaching is most often described as a "game of high-tech hide and seek", sharing many aspects with orienteering, treasure-hunting, and way marking.

Even if you are not ready to embrace geocaching at the refuge you can offer a geocaching event. Participants learn how to use a GPS unit but go off refuge to find the geocaches in the area. Here's an example of a geocaching event held at the Upper



Above: Grandpa and Granddaughter with their Refuge Travel Bug ready to go exploring for geocaches off the refuge. USFWS Photo.

geocachers. At the refuge event we released 22 stuffed birds. A tag with a mission card is attached to each bird with a note that said, "I want to go to a National

Geocoins are similar to Travel Bugs in that they are trackable. We had blue goose geocoins minted in the shape of the blue goose and with the text: National Wildlife Refuges Where Wildlife Comes First. The Region now has 500 + coins available to you. If you are interested in receiving some these coins to distribute at your visitor center or at a geocaching event contact Maggie O'Connell 612-713-

5167, Cindy Samples 507-494-6216 or Pam Steinhaus 815-273-2732 ext 16.

--From the Region 3 Visitor Services Update

Emergency Outreach: A Labor of Love

I think that I have a pretty cool job - but I wasn't thinking about that when we were sent to the hospital for the birth of our daughter. Things were pretty busy in the hospital when I went in for my labor and delivery. I was quickly hooked up to the fetal heart monitor and assured that my delivery nurse would be by to talk to me soon.

About an hour later Nurse Denise came in and began getting my medical history and other pertinent information. I answered dozens of questions, one of which was, "Where do you work?" I answered, "the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service." Denise paused for a second, looked up and excitedly asked, "So what do you do there?"

My fiancée, Colby and I explained that we are working to recover a federally endangered fish in the Missouri River. "Oh, you work on pallid sturgeon!" she exclaimed. I was quite surprised. It isn't often that people are familiar with this imperiled fish that lives in their own backyard.

It turns out that Denise and her husband are self-described "river rats" and use the Missouri River for recreation year round. Denise and her husband even participated in the Missouri River

340, a kayak and canoe race from Kansas City to St. Charles. For the next full day, Denise not only attended to my medical needs and comfort, but she also stopped to chat as time allowed her, asking questions and telling stories of her own experiences on the river. As strange as this may sound, it was a real comfort and a great distraction to talk about the plight of the pallid sturgeon and working on the river while in labor.



Pallid Sturgeon. USFWS Photo by Melissa Cheung and Jaime Pacheco.

The story doesn't end there. After some excitement in the labor room (the baby's heart rate dropped), I was whisked into the operating room for an emergency cesarean. Gabriella was born without too much incident, weighing in at a hefty eight pounds and 20.25 inches. She and Colby were quickly sent to the nursery to get her warmed, bathed and evaluated. I was left incapacitated on the operating table.

Dr. Thies who was also very interested in our work has a great sense of humor and commented that she would "have me back working on the boat in my bikini in no time!" I replied that it was too cold to pull gill nets in a bikini at this time of year. As this got a laugh from Dr. Thies and Denise, it prompted the anesthetist to ask what we were talking about. Without hesitation, I began explaining where we work and what we do. Everyone in the operating room began asking questions.

They were especially interested to find out about the reproductive history of the pallid sturgeon. Which I thought was rather appropriate. The anesthetist excitedly began telling his experiences of growing up in Russia and fishing for Beluga sturgeon with his family. He was quite knowledgeable about caviar and the current restrictions on Russian sturgeon. We were still talking about sturgeon when I was returned to the labor and delivery room where Colby was waiting for me. The look of disbelief on his face was amusing. We had just experienced the most dramatic and poignant event of our lives and here I was talking about pallid sturgeon. I guess that it is true that I have a pretty cool job. I love working even when I am not on the clock.

-- Patricia Herman
R3-Columbia FRO

Light Rail Connects Urban Dwellers to Refuge

The Hiawatha Light Rail Line links metro riders with transportation from downtown Minneapolis and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport to the Mall of America and back.

Opened in 2004, the line is operated by Metro Transit, who also operates Twin Cities' buses. Trains run every 7-15 minutes during the day, and 15-30 minutes apart in the evenings, daily.

This 12 mile line, which opened in 2004, served 42.9 million riders in its first five years. Ridership in 2008 totaled 10.2 million. 46 feeder bus lines reach the

light rail meaning that now access to the refuge is available by public transit to much of the Twin Cities population.

The light rail line has recently opened its newest stop at 34th Avenue and American Boulevard. This new stop is a mere half a mile from the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Visitor Center. Currently under reconstruction, the visitors center should

reopen by March 2010.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is able to connect with an inner city population that doesn't have the same recreational opportunities as those with cars.

Accessibility is critical when it comes to connecting urban dwellers to nature. Congressman Keith Ellison echoes the

importance of transportation in a recent interview. "Well, I think that one thing that we can do is show people the nature that is right around them. The fact is there are opportunities right here in the urban area to take advantage of, like for example right here in Minneapolis we are lucky to have several lakes in the city, several parks and these things, we've got to invest in them. We've got to make them walk-able," he says. In the wake of decades of decentralization, transportation solutions are not only desired but crucial.

It is increasingly important for the public to gain access to all sections of the metro. Mass transportation is critical for job access to both inner city job seekers and suburbanites, here in the Cities and nationwide. The Service benefits from these investment in that it eliminates the transportation barrier. "And we've got to make it so that if you live in north Minneapolis and you feel like walking down to the park, you can do that," says Ellison. "We've also got to make transportation accessible so that people can get there and take full advantage." Having one of the few urban refuges that is also on a light rail line opens up many new opportunities for the refuge and the residents of the Twin Cities.

--Valerie Rose Redmond, *External Affairs*



30 Year-Old Eagle Killed

When a band with the number “0629-05284” was fastened on its leg in 1980 near Steven’s Point, Wis., the bald eagle was less than three months old. While both the eaglet and the species faced better odds than they had a decade earlier, survival for both would still take tenacity and luck.

When that band was placed on its leg, there were fewer than 1,200 breeding pairs in the lower 48 states, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, or DDT, had been banned just eight years earlier and the Endangered Species Act was less than a decade old.

eagles had been removed from the endangered species list.

The eagle was hit by a vehicle north of Prairie du Chien, Wis., as it fed on road-kill raccoon, according to Ann Blankenship, Visitor Services Manager of the McGregor District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The driver called the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and a conservation officer collected the dead bird and delivered it to Refuge staff at the McGregor District. Staff sent the eagle to the National Eagle Repository.

It’s not surprising that the eagle wound up on the McGregor District. The District includes Pools 9, 10 and 11 of the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR and offers ideal habitat for eagles. When it was established in 1985, there were 11 active bald eagle nests. Today more eagles nest in Pool 9 than any other area of similar size in the lower 48 states. The District has more than 100 active bald eagle nests, according to Henkenius. During spring migration, as many as 2,000 bald eagles travel up the Mississippi River.

“Eagles may not be an uncommon sight in the area, but they still fill people with wonder. People are really proud of the eagles here,” Blankenship said. “People are still in awe of them.”

--Jane Hodgins
Conservation Planning

When it died on Nov. 11, number 0629-05284 was one of the oldest eagles ever recovered in the wild. Photo by Neil Henkenius, Biological Science Technician, McGregor District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.



When Refuge staff reported the band number to the U.S. Geological Survey for the national database, USGS staff expressed surprise. “Their initial response was ‘Send us a photo,’” according to Neil

Henkenius, Biological Science Technician.

Although captive bald eagles have been known to reach 40 years, wild eagles typically have a lifespan of 15-25 years. The eagle appeared to be healthy and not showing any signs of decline, Blankenship said.

For close to three decades, both the species and the eagle carrying band number 0629-05284 had tenacity and luck. When it died on Nov. 11, 2009, number 0629-05284 was one of the oldest eagles ever recovered in the wild, breeding pairs of bald eagles in the lower 48 states exceeded 9,789, and bald

A Note from Michael Hoff

I want to thank you for sponsoring approximately 100 needy children by providing gifts. Hitting the century mark, for sponsored children, was my goal for our Caring Tree Initiative. Achieving that level of contribution is what can be measured. The joy that your gifts brings to needy children is immeasurable.

The Friends of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center hosted “Christmas on the Prairie” on December 10 at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) in Fergus Falls, Minn.

The theme was Animal Olympics for this free public event and open house for the Prairie Science Class. The Prairie Science Class is a partnership between the PWLC and the Fergus Falls School District where 216, fourth and fifth graders visit the PWLC daily as part of their school day.

Animal Olympic feats included:

- How far can you jump?
- How long is your tongue?
- How many insects can you eat in one hour?

Families and visitors also participated in other activities such as CSI this Animal, Make and Learn about Inukshuks, Create Your Own Critter Wreath, and Decorate Animal Shaped Sugar Cookies. Of course many of those cookies were consumed immediately!

PWLC local artisans, Marion Ottes and Barry Stratton, displayed their seasonal art work of wildlife prints and wooden snowflakes.

In spite of the frigid temperatures, 275 people attended and 18 volunteers assisted in the successful event.

--Molly Stoddard, R3-Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC



Friends board member and PWLC volunteer Scott Norton (left) helps children create mini-Inukshuks during the 2009 Christmas on the Prairie at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. USFWS Photo by Molly Stoddard.



Above: A child makes deer tracks using latex tracks as part of CSI this Animal at the 2009 Christmas on the Prairie at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. USFWS Photo by Molly Stoddard.

Reward for Information on Wolf Killings in Minnesota

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Service), Office of Law Enforcement, is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for killing two gray wolves in Northern Minnesota. The Service is investigating the wolf killings in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Leech Lake Conservation Enforcement Department. Both wolves were killed on or around Nov. 9, 2009. One wolf was shot northwest of Grand Rapids, Minn., in the Ball Club area; the second was killed northwest of Two Harbors. The wolf killed near Two Harbors had been fitted with a radio tracking collar. The gray wolf is currently listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened in Minnesota. Killing a gray wolf is a violation of the Act, punishable by imprisonment of up to six months and a fine of up to \$25,000.

--External Affairs



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/>

January 2010

Thank you for entering your journal reports and photographs in the Fish and Wildlife Journal (aka. ARS)
<http://ars.fws.gov>.