

Inside Region 3

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External Affairs Office

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Federal Funds Heading to 34 Rural Fire Departments in the Midwest

Rural fire departments that help protect federal wildlife refuge lands in five states of the Midwest will soon be receiving a share of more than \$248,000 to bolster their department's firefighting capabilities. Thirty-four fire departments in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois and Michigan applied for funds from the program. The fire departments support national wildlife refuges and wetland management districts operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The funds are part of the Rural Fire Assistance Program, a federal pilot program that is providing more than \$1.2 million nationally to enhance the capabilities of fire departments that provide fire protection to lands managed by agencies within the U.S. Department of Interior.

"This program is designed to increase firefighter safety and firefighting capabilities of those small town fire departments that help provide fire protection to our refuges and wetland management districts," said Bill Hartwig, Midwest regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Recent history has shown us the importance of safely controlling fires on federal lands. These volunteer fire departments and rural fire departments provide a valuable service. The funds provided by this program will help those small departments get the additional training and equipment they might need not only to help us, but their own communities as well."

The Rural Fire Assistance Program is a cost-share program. Fire departments

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--Photo by Joel Trick

Sturgeon Wrestling

Stewart Cogswell of the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (left) and Rod Land, Wisconsin DNR Senior Fisheries Technician wrestle with a hefty lake sturgeon during May surveys on the Lower Fox River near DePere, Wis.

Comprehensive Study of Lake Sturgeon in Lake Michigan Draws Collaboration, Funding

Efforts to determine the current status of lake sturgeon in Lake Michigan are getting a big boost thanks to funding from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation for Advanced Scientific Studies. The funds will help support a three year collaborative research effort to conduct the first comprehensive status assessment of lake sturgeon in Lake Michigan.

The project is a cooperative effort by 10 principal investigators from the Lake Michigan region: Robert Elliott from the Service's Green Bay Fishery Resources Office (FRO), Dr. Nancy Auer from

Michigan Technological University, Dr. Trent Sutton from Purdue University, Dr. Doug Peterson from the University of Georgia, Dr. Kim Scribner from Michigan State University, Dr. Ed Baker from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Marty Holtgren from the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and Tom Meronek, Terry Lychwick and Greg Kornely from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Robert Elliott of the Green Bay FRO assembled the cooperators, coordinated the drafting of the project proposal submitted to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, and will serve as

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34 Rural Fire Departments Get Federal Funding

contribute 10 percent, the federal contribution is 90 percent. To receive funds provided by the Program, fire departments must have a fire agreement with a local Refuge or Wetland Management District, or be part of a statewide agreement with the State Forester who maintains cooperative agreements with rural and volunteer fire departments. Fire departments must also serve a community with less than 10,000 inhabitants. Fire departments can use the funds to purchase equipment and sup-

plies and conduct fire training.

Rural fire departments in the process of receiving funds from the Rural Fire Assistance Program are listed below.

The rural fire departments submitted grant applications through local offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As of August 15, grants have been awarded to 15 departments. The remaining grants will be awarded by September 30, 2001. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

The following fire and police departments (FPD) and fire departments (FD) will be receiving funds from the Rural Fire Assistance Program.

Illinois (6)

Havana FPD \$ 619; Lewiston FPD \$ 9,583; Ridgelake FPD \$ 9,583; Lake Egypt FPD \$ 3,965; Makanda Township FPD \$ 2,665; Williamson FPD \$ 9,673.

Michigan (1)

Spaulding Township FD \$ 9,583.

Minnesota (17)

Ashby FD \$ 9,583; Pelican Rapids FD \$ 9,583; Carver FD \$ 9,583; Green Isle FD \$ 9,583; Clinton FD \$ 8,370; Glenwood FD \$ 9,720; Starbuck FD \$ 9,720; Detroit Lakes

FD \$9,709; Erskine FD \$9,720; Mentor FD \$ 9,720; La Crescent FD \$2,197; Stoddard/Bergen Volunteer FD \$9,703; Minnesota City Volunteer FD \$3,062; Pickwick Volunteer FD \$2,725; Rolling Stone Volunteer FD \$3,245; Odessa FD \$9,671; Palisade FD \$9,234.

Missouri (2)

Rosendale Rural FPD \$9,583; Southern FPD of Holt County \$8,100.

Wisconsin (8)

Brownsville Fire Company \$1,275; Wapun FD \$2,732; Deer Park Area FD \$8,640; New Richmond FD \$5,287; Roberts/Warren FD \$8,991; Lincoln FD \$4,010; Necedah FD \$9,583; Knowles FD \$9,000.



Lake sturgeon fingerling.

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Sturgeon Assessment

the overall project manager.

The goal of the study is to describe the current status of lake sturgeon in Lake Michigan by determining their abundance, reproductive success, habitat use, the degree of genetic structuring, and the relative contribution of stocks or populations originating from at least seven rivers throughout the basin where remnant lake sturgeon are known or suspected to persist. This is the first step in determining the rehabilitation needs for this species in Lake Michigan. This was a critical need identified in a recent Great Lakes Fishery Trust sponsored workshop to identify and prioritize the research and assessment needs to restore lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes.

The project will also result in the funding of at least four Masters and PhD-level graduate projects. Overall project costs are expected to exceed \$800,000. The Great Lakes Fishery Trust is contributing \$359,000. The Giovanni Auletta Armenise Harvard Foundation is contributing \$190,000. Substantial in-kind and direct matching funds will come from each of the various agencies and institutions involved in the study.

Partners include: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, Purdue University, University of Georgia, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. *Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO*

Congressional Staff Get Up Close and Personal With Great Lakes Sea Lampreys

Congressional staff from Washington, D.C. offices of 10 U.S. representatives, three U.S. senators, two subcommittees, and one task force of the Great Lakes states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio observed field demonstrations of the Service's sea lamprey control techniques August 15.

Staff from the Service's Marquette and Ludington Biological Stations demonstrated various aspects of the sea lamprey management program including lampricide control, trapping, barriers, and sterilization of male lampreys.

Each of the 17 staff members was able to handle a sea lamprey and

place it into an auto injector to simulate lamprey sterilization procedures. In total, Service biologists spent about three and a half hours with congressional staff members providing information and answering questions about the lamprey control program.

The congressional staff tour was sponsored by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the U.S. Geological Survey – Great Lakes Science Center, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, and the Great Lakes Commission. *Denny Lavis, Ludington Biological Station*

Service Assists With Data Analysis That May Change Rules to Benefit Commercial Fisherman, Non-Target Fish in Wisconsin

Recent changes in the bathymetric distribution of lake whitefish has caused some concern from trap net commercial fishermen in Lake Michigan, licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Infestation by zebra and quagga mussels on traditional feeding grounds for lake whitefish have forced the fish to deeper waters and beyond the 90-foot maximum depth restriction now imposed on trap net operators.

To investigate the potential to increase the maximum depth restriction to accommodate the needs of fisherman, Wisconsin DNR worked

cooperatively with fishermen to collect catch information on target and non-target fishes in trap net sets in waters greater than 90 feet. The Wisconsin DNR invited Fisheries Biologist Charles Bronte of the Green Bay Fishery Resources Office to help analyze data collected in 2000 and 2001 to provide a basis for a proposed changes in commercial fishing rules this fall.

Data collected in 2000 indicate that trap netters caught significantly more marketable lake whitefish in waters deeper than 90 feet. They also caught more smaller, sub-legal whitefish, which are returned to the

water, but significantly less of these fish were dead or dying. More lake trout (a non target species) were also caught in trap net lifts greater than 90 feet but the death rate, which is very low, was about the same as in water less than 90 feet.

High catch rates of marketable lake whitefish will allow fisherman to reach their annual quotas with less fishing effort, which will result in less mortality on non-target fishes.

Results will be prepared by the Wisconsin DNR and the Green Bay FRO for publication in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. *Charles Bronte, Green Bay FRO*

Service Joins Fond du Lac Tribe to Assess Sturgeon Populations on the St. Louis River

Fisheries Biologists from Ashland Fishery Resources Office (FRO) joined members of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to survey lake sturgeon in the Upper St. Louis River August 10. The August survey was the third of four scheduled surveys that began in May.

The lake sturgeon population on the river near Cloquet, Minn., is being restored as a team effort by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Natural Resources Program and the Ashland FRO. Restoring lake sturgeon to historic areas is a high priority for the Fond du Lac Band. The goal of the project is to restore and maintain a self sustaining river resident population of lake sturgeon by 2025.

Using set lines, trap nets and electrofishing, the Ashland FRO is assisting the Fond du Lac Band in evaluating the recruitment of these fish and determining the relative abundance of lake sturgeon within this river system. Assessments were also conducted in June. A final survey is scheduled for September. The study will document the survival, recruitment, and growth for lake sturgeon within the Upper St.



Frank Stone (right) and Fond du Lac biologist Terry Peralt netted lake sturgeon during May surveys on the Upper St. Louis River.

Louis River System.

The research will help guide future lake sturgeon restoration projects in the Great Lakes Basin. Information on the habitat, movements, and range of juvenile sturgeon will be helpful for long-term population monitoring, and to understand their use of this riverine environment.

The success of the various capture methods will also assist in developing an efficient monitoring program to assess this long term sturgeon stocking program. *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Study Results Presented at the 4th International Symposium on Sturgeon

Staff from the Alpena Fishery Resources Office showcased its sturgeon restoration activities during the 4th International Symposium on Sturgeon held recently in Oshkosh, Wis. Alpena staff explained how the station is working in cooperation with state, tribal and non-governmental partners to restore lake sturgeon populations to the Great Lakes.

Biologists Emily Zollweg and Tracy Hill presented a poster on the Lake Huron Status Survey. Project Leader Jerry McClain gave a presentation on the work being conducted in the Detroit River, and Biologist Tracy Hill gave presentations on the Great Lakes lake sturgeon video and on population characteristics of lake sturgeon in Lake Huron, St. Clair Waterway and Niagara River.

The symposium provided excellent opportunities to learn about sturgeon research worldwide, exchange ideas with other sturgeon researchers and network for future projects in the Great Lakes. Approximately 450 people from 40 countries attended the symposium. *Tracy Hill, Alpena FRO*

LaCrosse Fish Health Center Examining Trout For Whirling Disease

The LaCrosse Fish Health Center, through a reimbursable agreement with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, began a state wide survey in June 1999, of all Michigan inland trout waters for *Myxobolus cerebralis* the myxosporean parasite which causes whirling disease. The whirling disease survey is in its final year and will be completed at the end of Fiscal Year 2001.

Salmonid whirling disease is a chronic parasitic infection of cultured and wild salmonids. The microscopic parasite has a selective tropism for cartilage of the fish and causes deformities of the axial skeleton and neural damage that results in the *caudal peduncle* (thin posterior area of the body to which the tail is attached) area turning black. Fish pathologists named the disease 'whirling', because of the erratic, tail-chasing behavior observed in young fish when startled. Heavy infections of the parasite in young fish can result in high mortalities or unmarketable filets.

The parasite was first reported in 1903 in central Europe and was accidentally introduced into the United States around 1955. However, concern for this myxosporean parasite grew when Montana fishery management biologists discovered the parasite in the mid to late 1990's in rainbow trout of the famed Madison River. Fishery biologists confirmed that as much as 90 percent of the wild rainbow trout population in a 50-mile stretch of the Madison had been destroyed by the parasite.

At roughly the same time, New York fishery biologists announced that whirling disease had been detected in four up-state trout and salmon fish hatcheries. Michigan and other states became aware of the social, political, and economic impact this parasite was having on the trout fishery in the intermountain west and east and initiated their own surveys.

Over 4,856 rainbow, brook and brown trout have been shipped on ice to the fish health laboratory since the initial shipment of trout were received from the Anna River, Mich., on June 17, 1999. All trout have been captured by electrocu-



University students Jessica Kuester and Peggy Stelzig prepare trout received from Michigan for the whirling disease survey.

tion from 95 streams, involving 224 sites in both the Upper and Lower Peninsula of Michigan.

Staff from the fish health lab working on the whirling disease survey include students from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, and Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis. Arriving specimens are processed immediately, beginning with recording information on stream surveyed, county, species of fish and numbers, etc. Then the heads are severed from the body with a sharp scapel blade and put through a process called "pepsin trypsin digest method." This method uses a process of heat and enzyme digestion to dissolve away the flesh and cartilage surrounding the parasitic spores. This process concentrates and makes the spores more visible to the diagnostician when using a microscope to view the tissue samples.

Myxobolus cerebralis is the only myxosporean found in the cartilage of salmonids. The mature spore is lenticular in side view and nearly circular in front view. The spores are 8-10 micrometers in greatest diameter and have two prominent ovate polar capsules with coiled filaments that may be extruded in certain situations. The parasite has a

two-host life cycle involving a trout and the aquatic worm (*Tubifex sp.*). Spores of the parasite are released into the aquatic environment when infected fish die and decompose or are consumed by predators or scavengers. Then the spores are ingested by the aquatic worms where the next phase of the parasite develops. The parasite transforms into the actinosporean (*Triactinomyxon*), this is the infective stage to the trout. After several months the infected worms release numerous mature forms into the water. The (*Triactinomyxon*) spores are much larger and have three polar capsules and three grapple-like appendages. The (*Triactinomyxon*) stage enters susceptible young trout through the epithelial cells of the skin, fins, buccal cavity, and lining of the digestive tract. Transformation into (*M. cerebralis*) spores then takes about three months and the life cycle is complete.

In addition to whirling disease, other fish disease pathogen being examined by the fish health lab include largemouth bass virus, bacterial kidney disease, white sturgeon herpesvirus and the white sturgeon iridovirus. Terrence Ott, LaCrosse Fish Health Center

Recovery Plan for Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid Completed

The Chicago Ecological Services Field Office recently completed the recovery plan for the federally threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera leucophaea*).

The eastern prairie fringed orchid is currently known to persist in 59 populations in six states, with most populations located in Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan or Ohio. Only 15 of the extant populations in the United States have full legal protection, and 11 populations lack serious management problems. Six U.S. populations are considered to have high viability, with potential for long term persistence, and four of these sites have full legal protection.

The eastern prairie fringed orchid may be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species when 22 highly viable populations are distributed across



--Photo by Wayne Fischer
Eastern prairie fringed orchid.

plant communities and physiographic regions within the historic range of the spe-

cies. The plan also describes ongoing activities such as research, demographic monitoring and population augmentation.

Preparation of the final plan became a collaborative effort led by the Chicago Ecological Services Field Office with information and expertise provided by many partners. The collaboration between the Chicago office and its partners has also enabled recovery actions.

Copies of the recovery plan are available from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chicago Illinois Field Office, 1250 South Grove, Suite 130, Barrington, Illinois 60010, telephone 847-381-2253 extension 215 and will soon be available on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website. TTY users may contact the Chicago, Illinois Field Office through the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. *Kristopher Lah, Chicago Field Office*

Chicago Field Office Staff Hand Pollinates Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid

Employees of the Chicago Field Office took to the hot and humid prairie remnants of northeastern Illinois this summer to hand pollinate the federally-threatened eastern prairie fringed orchid. The Chicago office annually hand pollinates orchids on four sites. Hand pollination of the orchid increases seed production of this threatened species. While hand pollination is being conducted, demographic information is also collected on each individual plant and census information is collected for each site. Later in the summer seeds will be collected from highly viable sites and dispersed in fall at new locations and at sites with low numbers.

In addition to staff members, participating volunteers are organized by June Keibler who has coordinated volunteer field work for the last eight years. Thanks to the commitment of volunteers, researchers, county and state partners and employees of the Chicago Field Office, recovery efforts for the eastern prairie fringed orchid continue with success. *Kristopher Lah, Chicago Field Office*

Grassland Restoration Tour Shows Numerous Techniques and Successes

Service field staff joined members of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota (Crookston and Morris campuses) and Prairie Restoration Inc., to discuss prairie reconstruction and restoration while touring sites in Clay County, Minn. The tour was organized by Brian Winter of TNC, and Doug Wells, refuge operations specialist with the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District as a spin-off from earlier meetings centered on providing greater forb diversity in prairie seedings.

About 50 group members gathered at 8:30 a.m. at TNC's Bluestem Prairie near Glyndon, Minn., for the first of several stops on the tour. The morning session focused on TNC's efforts to establish prairie grassland communities primarily through fall dormant seedings utilizing seed combined from native prairie tracts nearly adjacent to the restoration sites. Post seeding management included clipping, haying, properly timed fall overspray with "RoundUp," and burning, burning, and

more burning.

TNC is monitoring established seedings dating as far back as 1990, and will soon have data on the number of species established, as well as the impacts of various management activities (i.e. - fall overspray with "RoundUp").

The afternoon focused primarily on sites within Service waterfowl production areas managed by the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District. Larry Hanson, refuge operations specialist, showed several sites established by broadcast seeding over the snow in late winter - early spring. Seed beds included crop stubble, as well as brome/bluegrass stands that were burned prior to seeding. Stand establishment typically included properly timed herbicide applications, prescribed burning, and clipping, in addition to the seeding. The Detroit Lakes WMD has had good success with these techniques, again utilizing native prairie harvest as a primary seed source. *Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC*

Lake Sturgeon Spawning Site Discovered in the Detroit River

Staff from the Alpena Fishery Resources Office (FRO) and Central Michigan University Biology Department worked to identify current lake sturgeon spawning reefs in the Detroit River. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office and Ohio Division of Wildlife are funding the project. The goal of the project is to transmitter adult lake sturgeon and follow those fish to spawning location in the river. This goal was achieved during the 2001 field season when a newly discovered lake sturgeon spawning location was identified in the Detroit River.

The site, near Jug Island, was confirmed by the collection of fertilized lake

sturgeon eggs. A 118 pound, 6-foot lake sturgeon was also captured in 2001. This is the largest fish captured during the two year study. Lake sturgeon were captured with set lines, on average eight set-lines (25 hooks per line) were fished each day. Sampling protocol allowed for both set lining and sonic tracking of lake sturgeon. Set lines were deployed on Monday, lifted and reset on Wednesday, and pulled on Friday. Fish were tracked on Tuesday and Thursday.

A total of 32 lake sturgeon were captured during the 2001 field season, 10 of those fish were implanted with sonic transmitters. Five to six fish were routinely relocated in the Detroit River dur-

ing tracking efforts each week. Two fish were relocated in Western Lake Erie and four fish traveled up to the 'sturgeon hole' in Lake St. Clair. Michigan DNR crews working on a telemetry project in Lake St. Clair located these fish.

The project has benefited from volunteers from the following agencies: The Service's East Lansing Field Office and Ann Arbor Law Enforcement; USGS Great Lakes Science Center; Ohio Division of Wildlife's Fairport Harbor Fisheries Station and the DownRiver Walleye Federation. The cooperation from these organizations has been greatly appreciated. *Tracy Hill, Alpena Fishery Resources Office*



Refuge Volunteer Hershel Couch stands near the photography blind he constructed that offers views in three different directions near the refuge's Pine Ridge Nature Trail..

New Photography Blind Enhances Wildlife Photography Opportunities at Seney NWR

Seney National Wildlife Refuge has a new photo blind thanks to a grant from the North American Nature Photographers Association (NANPA) and the construction expertise of Refuge Volunteer Hershel Couch. Mr. Couch constructed the blind so that it offers views in three different directions,

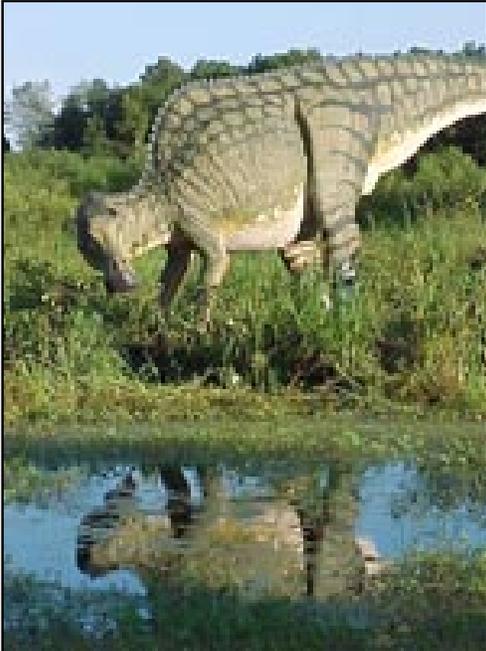
and added features that allow it to be moved as seasonal wildlife photography opportunities change. The blind was constructed of arsenic-free treated lumber.

The blind has been placed on a little-used trail accessible from the Pine Ridge Nature Trail. *Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR*

Green Bay Biologist Joins Study of Juvenile Lake Sturgeon in Lake Michigan

Through funding provided by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, a team of investigators from the Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Purdue University are preparing to study the early life history stages of lake sturgeon in Lake Michigan's Green Bay. Dr. Trent Sutton of Purdue University will serve as lead investigator and will be joined by Fishery Biologist Robert Elliott from the Green Bay Fishery Resources Office and Tom Meronek and Greg Kornely from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and a crew of graduate and undergraduate students.

The study will determine population abundance and biological characteristics of larval, juvenile, and subadult lake sturgeon in the lower Peshtio River and inner waters of Green Bay, and assess the seasonal and spatial movement patterns of early life stages in relation to the physical, chemical, and biological environment, and develop a sampling protocol to standardize assessment surveys of young lake sturgeon in lotic and lentic environments of the Great Lakes. These have all been determined to be critical knowledge gaps in identifying rehabilitation needs for this species in the Great Lakes. *Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO*



A replica of a 30-foot maiasaur, a duck-billed dinosaur, was visible to refuge visitors August 18-19.

Dinosaurs Spotted at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge

More than 5,500 awe-struck refuge visitors were provided a glimpse of the prehistoric past when life-sized dinosaurs inhabited parts of Mingo NWR August 18-19.

The dinosaur replicas were created by Missouri Paleontologist Guy Darrough. Darrough researches dinosaurs in Missouri and built the replicas to help people better understand the prehistoric history of the area. The replicas attracted a huge number of visitors to the refuge. The Refuge Visitor Center helped orient 977 people over the weekend, and interpreters spoke with 5,500 people in the field with the dinosaurs.

Visitors were able to view the dinosaurs through the bald cypress and tupelo swamps over the weekend. Paleontologists are excavating a site near Marble Hill, about 25 miles north of the refuge. The site is believed to contain the remains of the largest duck billed dinosaur ever found.

Interpreters and paleontologists explained that fossils belonging to the very same type of dinosaur have been found just north of the refuge. The swamp that they inhabited 65 million years ago is very similar to the swamp at Mingo NWR. *Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR*



--Photo by Donald Wiley

Youth Conservation Corps members Angela Faulkner and Nicki Watchorn conduct an afternoon feeding.

Pendills Creek, Hiawatha Forest Hatcheries Benefit From YCC, Volunteer Programs

This summer, two local youth were offered a work experience through the annual YCC (Youth Conservation Corp) program. Pendills Creek and Hiawatha Forest hatcheries are one of the few Service offices that offer this program due to the elimination of specific YCC funding. The program is an excellent outreach tool and work experience. Each year we receive dozens of comments from local residents concerning the program and past participants.

Candidates are recruited through local schools. Two individuals are selected with one assigned to the Pendills Creek NFH and the other to the Hiawatha Forest NFH. Each works closely with the fishery biologists and maintenance worker.

Over an eight week period, participants assist with fish culture, grounds and building maintenance and outreach.

The program culminates with a field trip. This year, a Service fisheries biologist took the YCC participants to Seney NWR and Tahquamenon Falls State Park. Also this year, Mike Donofrio, a full-time volunteer, assisted during the spring and summer. Mike Donofrio took time off from school to gain work experience in fisheries. He volunteered for a total of 960 hours with living quarters provided at the Hiawatha Forest substation. Mike performed the duties of an entry level fisheries biologist and did an excellent job. *David Radloff, Pendills Creek NFH*

Regional Website Nearing 7 Million Hits This Fiscal Year

The Midwest Region's website (<http://midwest.fws.gov>) is currently on pace for 7 million hits by the end of this fiscal year. Through the end of July 2001, the site has already received more than 5.4 million hits. April and May 2001, were the busiest months recorded

in the website's history, with 1.1 million hits in May and 1.2 million hits in April. A tracking software formula that translates "website hits to visitors" indicates just over 76,000 visitors visited the sight in April alone. *Larry Dean, External Affairs*

Shiawassee Refuge Staff Reach 2,000 Kids and Parents During 'Kids Night Out'

When thousands of children and their families converged on the downtown area of Saginaw, Mich., the evening of August 10, 2001, Staff from Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge joined singers, magicians, storytellers and others to meet them. In between entertainment by puppets, pony rides, live animals, food, crafts, games and prizes, refuge staff provided a conservation message, it was all part of "Kids Night Out."

Refuge staff from Shiawassee NWR provided educational opportunities with information about endangered species. Each summer, several organizations and businesses in Saginaw sponsor six weeks of free concerts and fun at their 'Friday Night Live' program. The program August 10 was just for kids and kids at heart.

Three staff members from Shiawassee NWR set up a display featuring confiscated wildlife trade items, including some endangered species, to show the children. In addition, the Refuge's SCEP trainee, Aleisha Troendle, showed children how to



SCEP student Aleisha Troendle of shows children how to fold an origami wolf head as part of the Refuge's Kids' Night Out Activities. Park Ranger Michelle Vander Haar (standing left) showed endangered species items to visitors during the event

make an origami wolf head to take home with them.

Approximately 2,000 children and their families participated. *Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR*

St. Croix River Monitoring Team Reports No Zebra Mussels Found North of Hudson, Wisconsin

Service dive team members Nick Rowse, Scott Yess joined divers Byron Karnes and Bob Whaley of the National Park Service and dive tenders Collen Whaley and Liesel Virchow to recently complete approximately 25 dives to check zebra mussel distribution and abundance on the St. Croix River. This was the second of three dive weeks scheduled for 2001.

To date, results have been better than expected. Zebra mussel numbers appear to be less than 2000 results, and no zebra mussels were found north of Hudson, Wis.

Information obtained from the underwater surveys assist the Multiagency Zebra Mussel Task Force to make sound management decisions on issues such as boating restrictions, mussel management and public education. Also the St. Croix has several threatened and endangered species including the Winged Maple Leaf, one of the rarest mussel species in North America.

Partners include: National Park Service - St. Croix River; Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources, Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Coast Guard. *Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO*

Accomplishment Reports Received

Accomplishment reports with accomplishment dates between Aug. 6-24 are listed below. Reports filed during this period, but with accomplishment dates occurring before Aug. 6 are listed here, but can be found by using the Report Manager Utility on the ARS.

1. Lake Sturgeon Database is a Work in Progress

Laurel Bennett, Great Lakes Basin EcoTeam

2. Regional Website Nearing 7 Million Hits This Fiscal Year

Larry Dean, External Affairs

3. Coded Wire Tag Extraction

Emily Zollweg, Alpena FRO

4. LaCrosse FRO Assists Fort McCoy With Milfoil Removal

Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO

5. Special Agents, Inspectors Learn Value of ARS and Media Relations

Scott Flaherty, External Affairs

6. Metzger Marsh Fishery Update

Susan wells, Ottawa NWR

7. Comprehensive Assessment of Lake Sturgeon in Lake Michigan Draws Collaboration and Funding

Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO

8. Dinosaurs at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge

Molly Mehl, Mingo NWR

9. Staff Assist the Minnesota Waterfowl Association with Woody Camp

Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

Accomplishment Reports Continued

10. Regional Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

11. Federal Funds Heading to 34 Fire Departments in the Midwest

Scott Flaherty, External Affairs

12. Waterfowl Survey Developed for Sokaogon Chippewa Community of Wisconsin, Mole Lake Band

Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO

13. Congressional Staff Get Up Close and Personal With Sea Lampreys

Denny Lavis, Ludington Bio. Station

14. Grassland Restoration Meeting Shows Numerous Techniques and Successes

Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

15. Pendills Creek and Hiawatha Forest NFH's Benefit From YCC and Volunteer Program

David Radloff, Pendills Creek NFH

16. Photo Blind Enhances Wildlife Photography Opportunities at Seney NWR

Marianne Kronk, Seney NWR

17. Service Joins Partners to Promote Conservation at 'Pack to School' Event

Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR

18. Minnesota Valley Recruits Full-time Park Ranger

Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR

19. Rydell Open House is a Hit

Rick Julian, Rydell NWR

20. Study Results Presented at the 4th International Symposium on Sturgeon

Tracy Hill, Alpena FRO

21. Shiawassee NWR Participates in Kids' Night Out

Becky Goche, Shiawassee NWR

22. Chicago Office Hand Pollinates Flowers of the Federally Threatened Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid

Kristopher Lah, Chicago FO

23. Whirling Disease Survey in Michigan

Terrence Ott, LaCrosse Fish Health Center

24. Green Bay FRO Assists Wisconsin with Data Analysis for Commercial Fishing Rule Change

Charles Bronte, Green Bay FRO

25. Alpena FRO Staff Participate in 2nd Annual Thunder Bay River Riverfest

Tracy Hill, Alpena FRO

26. Chicago Field Office Completes Recovery Plan for Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid

Kristopher Lah, Chicago FO

27. Service Joins Fond du Lac Tribe to Assess Sturgeon Populations on the St. Louis River

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

28. Dive Team Completes Zebra Mussel Monitoring on the St. Croix River

Scott Yess, LaCrosse FRO

29. Lake Sturgeon Spawning Site Discovered in the Detroit River

Tracy Hill, Alpena FRO

30. Muscatatuck NWR Works With Seven Private Landowners With Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program

Susan Knowles, Muscatatuck NWR

31. Regional Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

32. Illinois River Refuges Enhance Staff Diversity

Ross Adams, Illinois River NWFR

33. Fisheries Biologist is Associate Editor for Leading Fisheries Research Journal

Charles Bronte, Green Bay FRO

34. Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Video Distributed

Tracy Hill, Alpena FRO

35. Service Chairs Environmental Management Program Coordinating Committee

Dan Stinnett, Ecological Services

36. Ashland FRO and Wisconsin DNR - Bayfield Office Partner on Fish Community Study in Whittlesey Creek.

Mark Dryer, Ashland FRO

37. Motor Vessel Togue Being Assessed For Seaworthiness

Clarice Beckner, Jordan River NFH

38. Green Bay FRO Biologist Joins Cooperators to Initiate Study of Juvenile Lake Sturgeon

Robert Elliott, Green Bay FRO

39. Bitterns Nesting at Bisson Lake, Birders Still Marvel at Restored Lake

Michael Murphy, Hamden Slough NWR

40. EEO Training-Meet the Laotian Community

Margaret Anderson, Agassiz NWR

41. Rice Lake NWR Participates in Mille Lacs Band W2W

Mary Stefanski, Rice Lake NWR

42. Ashland FRO Participates in Deepwater Coregonid/Lake Trout Fish Identification Workshop

Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO

Inside Region 3



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