

E. Blesiot

# The Talon

Rocky Mountain Arsenal and Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Newsletter

December 2004

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## Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge 2004 Highlights

- *1,156 anglers attended orientations for fishing*
- *Fishing fees totaled \$5456.23 for the '04 season*
- *Volunteers contributed 7,140 hours*
- *New Public Use Plan implemented*
- *5,000 acres transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

## A Look Back - Highlights of 2004

This year has been full of many great accomplishments - none of which could have happened without our fantastic volunteer corps! You all have been so willing to jump in and help whenever we needed it most and the Refuge staff appreciates it.

There were many Visitor Services projects and plans through the year that were completed and implemented, too many to mention them all, but here are some of the highlights. Visitors will soon drive directly to the Visitor Center without stopping at the South Gate. A variety of new nature programs were developed. The Rod and Gun Club viewing blind was completed to include a large interpretive panel. Our Refuge Rover was re-wrapped and has received lots of great comments. A new traveling Refuge exhibit was purchased. A Recreational Fee program for fishing was implemented and

nearly \$5,500 was collected which will go toward the fishing program and supporting facilities. We hosted a fun and educational event celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week. Planning continues for the new Visitor Center to be constructed in the Prairie Gateway. Our weekend drop-in visitation has increased substantially from last year. A new Public Use Plan was signed and implemented. And, the best of the best - the first transfer of 5,000 acres from the Army to the Service officially establishing the Refuge! In one way or another, you all played a very important part toward the success of these highlights.

We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful and talented group of volunteers - you are second to none. We all are looking forward to the new year and working with all of you. A **BIG THANKS** for your hard work and contribution of 7,140 hours of volunteer service to the Refuge! I wish you all a very safe and happy holiday season!

Sherry James

Visitor Services Supervisor

Visit our website <http://rockymountainarsenal.fws.gov/>

## Calendar of Events



### February Volunteer Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 2005

7 pm at the Visitor Center

Guest speaker Tom Jackson

### Social Gathering

Thursday, December 16, 2004

Holiday Potluck

Building 129 ARF



### Training

Visitor Center Operations

Saturday, January 15, 2005

1pm-3pm at the Visitor Center.

This training is highly encouraged for ALL Refuge volunteers. To RSVP contact Jeannine at 303 289 0471.



## Two Ponds – Seth Beres

### Prairie Restoration

In an ongoing effort to restore and preserve a 20-acre portion at Two Ponds NWR as an example of a pristine native prairie ecosystem, over 90 students at Sierra Elementary School volunteered their time and effort this October to help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service eliminate exotic vegetation by replacing it with native grasses and plants. This spring, the Service interseeded native grasses and forbs and conducted ongoing monitoring and application of herbicides. This fall, Sierra continued their efforts to restore the area by planting over 50 large native forbs (Rubber Rabbit brush). Each year, several classes at Sierra Elementary School visit Two Ponds on field trips where staff from the Service take them on tours and conduct environmental education programs on the Refuge. In return, students at Sierra often help the Service by donating their skills toward helping with habitat restoration and clean-

up projects to benefit Two Ponds and the local Arvada community.

### New Grants!

Recently, the Service partnered with the Two Ponds Preservation Foundation and submitted 2 grant proposals to fund potential projects in the future that would improve both the visitor services and environmental education program at Two Ponds NWR. If either proposal is approved, the Foundation has generously agreed to match the fund contributions awarded via the grants.



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### Refuge Day 2004

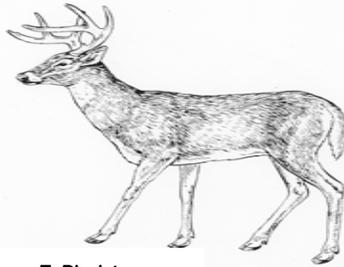
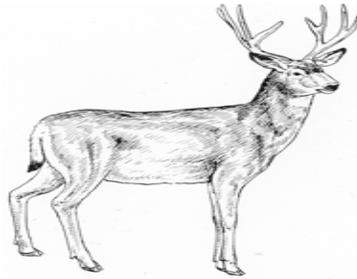
Susan Echelberger

I wanted to say a very special thank you to everyone who helped out during National Wildlife Refuge Week. We had over 300 people visit that day. We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day. We are in preliminary planning for an event for the spring – so stay tuned! Again thanks for all your help; we can't do it without you!

*Thank You*

## South Gate Update

With the transfer of nearly 5,000 acres from the U.S. Army to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in April 2004, change is inevitable. The South Gate has been modified to automatically open for after hours outbound traffic. Remember to approach the gate very slowly because the roadbed sensor is located extremely close to the gate. On weekends starting in December, there will no longer be staff at the gate. The South Gate will automatically open at 7:30 am and close at 4:30 pm. If you require Refuge access outside of normal business hours, contact Jeannine at 303 289 0471.



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## Deer Warning!

It's that time of year again! The deer are in the rut and they need your help. Please watch your speed and be cautious of wildlife approaching your vehicle while you are on the Refuge. Over the past couple of weeks, the Refuge has lost several deer due to careless driving incidents. We would hate to lose another one of our magnificent creatures!



## Volunteer Assistance Needed

With winter well on its way, a majority of the projects at the Refuge are winding down. However, we still need your help with a variety of projects!

### Visitor Center Assistance

Greet visitors and provide information about the exhibits, lab activities, the Refuge and its programs, and help answer phones and respond to questions and requests. Available 7 days a week.

### Roving Interpreters

Walk or bike the Refuge's nature trails, offer direction and guidance

to visitors, provide interpretation and answer questions about the site, and present accurate up-to-date information about the Refuge, its history, natural resources and cleanup. Available Saturday and Sunday.

### Habitat Technician

Volunteers are needed to assist with revegetation of the National Eagle and Wildlife Repository lawn. Available Monday-Friday.

### Trail Maintenance

Volunteer help is needed for trail maintenance projects including trail repair and weeding this coming spring. The

projects do not involve high physical activity. Projects, dates, and the number of volunteers needed will be listed in the February Talon. Help us keep our trails in top shape! For more information about all of these opportunities, please contact Jeannine at 303 289 0471.

## 2004 Fishing Season Ivan Vicente

The 2004 fishing season proved that the Refuge is a true urban fishing asset for the community. More than 1100 anglers attended the orientation in 2004. The catch rate this year exceeded one fish per hour at both lakes, indicating that the Refuge lakes provide for good recreational fishing. The Service staff is currently reviewing the recreational fee fishing program to make improvements and recommendations for implementation in 2005. A meeting to discuss details about the 2005 fishing season will be held in February 2005 with Arsenal Anglers and other interested volunteers. The meeting date will be announced in the February Talon. Thank you to all the volunteers who supported the program this year!

## New Deputy Refuge Manager Selected

Beginning December 12, Bruce Hastings will leave his current position of Wildlife and Habitat Supervisor to become the Refuge's new Deputy Refuge Manager. Bruce began with the Park Service as a Graduate Student performing research at Great Smokey Mountain National Park. After his post doctorate work at the University of Tennessee, he began with the National Wildlife Federation in Washington D.C. and served 15 months there. Then he and his wife Nancy moved to Colorado and Bruce worked with the Division of Wildlife monitoring Peregrine Falcons. Bruce began at RMANWR as a Conservation Supervisor and has served in many different positions. Some of you may know Bruce, he has been a part of the Refuge since February of 1990, and for those of you who do not know him, stop by and introduce yourself.

## Pass the Bass a Success Ivan Vicente

Happy Holidays  
Jeannine Kimble

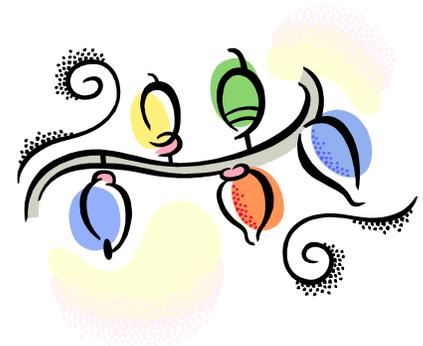
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I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped make the fish transfer a success on October 28. A total of 73 bass were transferred from Lake Mary to Lower Derby. Thirteen volunteers helped with the project, and most important of all, volunteers accounted for more than fifty percent of the total fish transferred! The Service staff is very pleased and impressed with your participation and performance. The project also allowed the opportunity for the volunteers to meet some of the staff. Some staff admitted that the large number of bass caught were a result of the anglers' strategies on cut-bait - it made the event look like a cat-fish tournament! Overall, everyone had a great time working toward improving the Refuge's fishery.



E. Biesiot

It has been another great year at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife



Refuge Complex. I have been very lucky to work with such a dynamic group of outstanding Refuge volunteers. I know that the staff can count on you all to assist us whenever there is a need. This is a busy time of year for us all and I hope to see you all at the Holiday Potluck on December 16 and I wish you a happy holiday season. I look forward to another great year of working with you all. Thank you!

## Wildlife Update

Refuge biologists have a busy season ahead of them with several big projects underway. The big projects include weekly bald eagle roost counts, raptor counts and waterfowl surveys. As of November 23 there were six bald eagles roosting on the Refuge, three adults and three sub-adults. Raptor counts have begun, and biologists have counted golden eagles, prairie falcons and ferruginous hawks. Keep your eyes to the sky and you too could spot one of our many raptors!

Twice a month biologists are performing waterfowl surveys, to assist with population monitoring and to determine the species present, this study is done on a yearly basis.

Scent stations surveys are under way. These surveys determine the trend in mammal populations at the Refuge.

Collared fawns are still being tracked.

Prairie dogs from SW Section 31 (central portion of the Refuge) are being relocated to Section 19 (northern portion of the Refuge).

Biologists are also gearing up to get the deer classification and population study underway. This survey will provide a more accurate sex classification and population size. This study will utilize numerous staff and volunteers for 3 days, if you are interested in assisting with this survey contact Jeannine at 303 289 0471.

**The scent station study will yield insights into whether and how remediation and restoration efforts have affected these populations, and whether future activities are likely to do so.**



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