

*photo by Tom MacKenzie / USFWS*



Challenger, a non-releasable bald eagle,  
cared for by the non-profit American  
Eagle Foundation, dedicated to  
protecting bald eagles and their habitat

# Regional Director's Awards Ceremony

*Marriott Century Center, Century Ballroom*

*Monday, May 4, 2009, 1 until 4:30 pm*

**Welcome, Regional Director Sam Hamilton**

**Posting of Colors, Reserve Officers Training Corps, South Cobb High School, Austell, Georgia  
Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Leon Bradley**

**National Anthem, William Bancroft, Air National Guard Band (Retired), Georgia State Defense Force Band**

**Opening Remarks, Regional Director Sam Hamilton**

**Presentation of Regional Director's Honor Awards for Volunteer Service**

John C. Hale, Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge

Geri Harper, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery

Jack Harper, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery

Jim Hess, Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge

Bob Hynum, White River National Wildlife Refuge

Vicki McCoy, Regional Office, Atlanta, GA

Marilyn Parrott, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery

Tony Thomas, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge:

Jackie Carter

William Hay

Walt and Sally Jetter

Evertte Sikes

Martha Szymoniak

Jack Webb

**Presentation of Regional Director's Honor Awards for Employees**

Victoria M. Anderson, Information Technology Division, Atlanta, GA

Debra L. Bossie, Law Enforcement, Atlanta, GA

Carolyn Boykin, Budget, Planning and Financial Services, Atlanta, GA

Johnny W. Bradford, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge

William B. Brooks, Ecological Services, Jacksonville, FL

Tiaujanna Burnett, Law Enforcement, Atlanta, GA

Peter V. Campbell, Ecological Services, Panama City, FL

Rockwell Chesser, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

Darryl R. Clark, Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA

Martin V. Coffman, Law Enforcement, Jackson, MS

Theresa M. Collins, Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA

Sarah C. Dawsey, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge

Carlos Echevarria, Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery

Katherine D. Francis, Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA

Paul B. Gideon, Jr., Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge

Karen J. Herrington, Panama City Fisheries RSRC Office  
Eric S. Johnson, Cache River National Wildlife Refuge  
Steven B. Klett, National Key Deer Refuge  
Charles L. McGee, Realty Division, Atlanta, GA  
Christopher R. Murphy, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery  
Vivian Negron-Ortiz, Ecological Services, Panama City, FL  
Debra K. Pettibone, Law Enforcement, Nashville, TN  
Rosla G. Plant, Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery  
Mary M. Powell, Federal Assistance Division, Atlanta, GA  
Takako Sato, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge  
Crystal T. Thomas, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery  
William R. Wayman, Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery  
Brett W. Wehrle, Central Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Barbara D. West, Realty Division, Atlanta, GA  
Elizabeth J. Whaley, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge  
Deborah F. Young, External Affairs, Atlanta, GA  
Lora A. Zimmerman, Ecological Services, Charleston, SC

*Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge Timber Cruise Team*  
Lamar C. Dorris, Jr., Theodore Roosevelt Refuges Complex  
Dusty Dendy, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge  
Waymon C. Fondren, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge  
Joseph E. Harsh, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge  
Leif A. Karnuth, Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge  
Travis L. Prisock, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge  
Rebecca L. Rosamond, North Mississippi Refuges Complex  
Henry R. Sansing, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge  
Richard E. Smith, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge

*Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Team*  
Mark A. Cantrell, Ecological Services, Asheville, NC  
Susan T. Cielinski, National Wildlife Refuge System, Regional Office  
Amanda K. Hill, Ecological Services, Charleston, SC  
Patricia Woods, Office of the Solicitor, Knoxville, TN

*Louisiana Black Bear Critical Habitat Designation Team*  
Deborah Fuller, Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA  
Robert E. Greco, Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA  
David M. Soileau, Jr., Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA

*Matrix/Biolage Team*  
Susan Cassell, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society  
Jack Karkis, Saloncentric, Fort Myers, FL  
Debora Koyama, Biolage/MATRIX/LOreal U.S.A., New York, NY  
William G. Thomas, Jr., J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge  
Toni Westland, J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge

*Natural Resources Conservation Services Consultation Team*

Jay B. Herrington, Ecological Services, Jacksonville, FL  
Bradford S. Rieck, Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA  
Stanley K. Simpkins, Ecological Services, Jacksonville, FL

*North Mississippi Hurricane Team*

Christopher L. Allen, North Mississippi Refuges Complex  
William H. Jones, North Mississippi Refuges Complex  
Carlton Leachman, North Mississippi Refuges Complex  
Jimmy E. Perry, North Mississippi Refuges Complex  
Kevin C. Riales, North Mississippi Refuges Complex

*Office of Surface Mining Liaison Team*

Virgil L. Andrews, Jr., Ecological Services, Frankfort, KY  
David R. Horning, Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA

*Regional Office Emergency Recovery Team*

Dale L. Bailey, Hurricane Team  
Kevin R. Brooks, Contracting and Grants Services  
Carville W. Edwards, Division of Engineering  
Brian K. Ellington, Hurricane Team  
Dorothy Gibson, Hurricane Team  
Tyler R. Henderson, Division of Engineering  
Emery Hoyle, Hurricane Team  
Richard Huffines, National Wildlife Refuge System  
Brenda Kotch, Contracting and Grants Services  
Lester Lewis, Contracting and Grants Services  
John Morrow, Hurricane Team  
Jo Muratti, Contracting and Grants Services  
James R. Parker, Division of Engineering  
Steve E. Sponaugle, Hurricane Team  
Mark Tapp, Hurricane Team

*Roebuck Springs Watercress Darter Team*

Daniel J. Drennen, Ecological Services, Jackson, MS  
Thomas D. Grace, Jr., Law Enforcement, Daphne, AL  
Eric W. Spadgenske, Ecological Services, Daphne, AL  
Robert W. Tawes, Ecological Services, Daphne, AL  
Gerald A. Thornton, Department of the Interior, Knoxville, TN

*Texas Petroleum Investigative Team*

Jack R. Bohannon, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex  
Scotty J. Boudreaux, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex  
John B. Branum, National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA  
Michael Centola, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Baton Rouge, LA  
Sidney B. Charbonnet, Law Enforcement, Lacombe, LA

*Wildlife-Friendly Reservoir Design Team*

Darla J. Fousek, Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL  
Doris Marlin, U.S. Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville, FL  
Steve T. Schubert, Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL  
Liberta E. Scotto, Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL

*Yazoo Pumps Backwater Team*

Thomas L. Edwards, Migratory Birds, Hazen, AR  
Joseph A. Fontaine, Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Doug Fruge, Gulf Coast Fisheries  
Charles A. Sloan, Refuges, Anchorage, AK

**Presentation of Distinguished Awards of Achievement**

*Conservation Award in Honor of Tyler Alley Sykes*

Gypsy Gooding Hanks, North Louisiana Refuges Complex

*Outreacher of the Year Award*

Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge

*PEERS Award (People Exhibiting Excellence in Regional Support)*

Donald H. Calder, Contracting and Grants Services, Atlanta, GA

*Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) Leadership Award*

Steven Alexander, Ecological Services, Cookeville, TN  
Cynthia G. Bohn, Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA  
Laura Brandt, Migratory Birds, Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Stephen C. Brock, National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA  
Michael R. Bryant, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge  
Gail Carmody, Ecological Services, Panama City, FL  
Andrew Currie, Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery  
Dean W. Demarest, Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA  
Terry Doyle, Migratory Birds, Arlington, VA  
Larry Handley, USGS, Lafayette, LA  
James Harris, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex  
Chuck Hunter, National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA  
Amy Keister, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, Vicksburg, MS  
Nicole E. Lamp, Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA  
R. Wilson Laney, South Atlantic Fisheries, Raleigh, NC  
Diana Swan, Federal Aid, Atlanta, GA  
Sandra S. Tucker, Ecological Services, Athens, GA  
William B. Uihlein, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, Vicksburg, MS  
David Viker, Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA  
Kristi Watkins, External Affairs, Atlanta, GA

*Wage System Employee of the Year*

Carl L. Campbell, Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery  
Bruce D. Mitchell, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex

**Special Acknowledgement of Previously Presented Awards and Recognition**

Kay McCutcheon, South Carolina Conservationist of the Year

David Hubbard, 2009 Southeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Cynthia Dohner, Department of the Interior Distinguished Service Award

**Recognition of Military Duty of Southeast Region Employees in 2008**

“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, learning from failure.” *Colin Powell*

To the men and women of the Service’s Southeast Region who have temporarily left off making a living to perform military service, we salute you. To all the members of their families who still carry on with making a living, we salute you. Thank you.

**Presentation of Regional Director’s Conservation Awards**

*Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Montgomery, Alabama*

Stanley Cook

William Nichols

Paul Johnson

*Alabama Department of Transportation, Montgomery, Alabama*

Vincent E. Calametti

D. J. McInnes

John Shill

*American Airlines, San Juan, Puerto Rico*

Aimet Ardin

Peter Dolara

Jose Rucabado

Carlos Santana

Julio Sotero

Minette Velez

*Ducks Unlimited, North Charleston, South Carolina*

Craig LeSchack

Billy Webster

*U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Gordon, Georgia*

Kenneth Boyd

Allen Braswell

Steve Camp

Robert Drumm

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Atlanta, Georgia*

William Ainslie

Tanya Code

Jim Giattina

Palmer Hough

Thomas Welborn

Paul R. LaPointe, Tennessee Valley Authority, Office of Environmental Resources and Services, Muscle Shoals, AL  
Angeolace Blue-McLean, Friends of Chassahowitza National Wildlife Refuges Complex, Crystal River, FL  
Captain John Burton, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Division of Law Enforcement, Crystal River, FL  
Joseph Cole, U. S. Environment Protection Agency, Knoxville, TN  
Kenneth Haddad, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, FL  
John R. Inabinet, Santee Cooper Public Service Authority, Moncks Corner, SC  
Scott and Carol McCorkle, Avian Reconditioning Center, Apopka, FL  
Maurice F. Mettee, Geological Survey of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL  
Luke Naylor, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Little Rock, AR  
Matt Van Paepeghem, WennMarr Management Company LLC, Fairburn, GA  
Josh Raglin, Norfolk Southern Corporation, Dorchester, SC  
Terrance Salt, South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force, Miami, FL

**Closing Remarks, Regional Director Sam Hamilton**

**Retiring of Colors, Reserve Officers Training Corps, South Cobb High School, Austell, GA  
Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Leon Bradley**

**Social Hour, Refreshments - Immediately following ceremony, until 4:30 pm**

## Honor Awards for Volunteer Service

### **Dr. John C. Hale**

#### **Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge**

Dr. Hale began volunteering at the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge in 2002 when he volunteered to manage the Wood Duck Nesting Pox program. This program entails the management of 104 wood duck boxes, including pre-season preparations as well as the box maintenance, and the conduct of monthly inspections (March through July) to collect and record detailed nesting information.

In addition, each year John assembles a work crew of several people to undertake a three to five day long Refuge construction project. Past projects have included construction of a walking bridge across Outfall Canal, the Rose Bay Boat Launching Dock, and the New Holland Trail Extension. This past year, Dr. Hale's crew replaced 27 wood duck nesting boxes, including the installation of new poles and predator guards on boxes destroyed by bears.

John has directly contributed 80 hours per year to the Refuge for each of the past seven years, not including a drive time of more than two hours during the initial years. In addition, he has brought approximately 130 hours per year of additional help through personal recruiting. In total, the Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge has benefited from approximately 1,500 hours of volunteer service as a direct result of John's efforts.

For his dedication, enthusiasm, and for the many donated hours put forth to make all of this possible, Dr. John C. Hale is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

### **Geri Harper**

#### **Friends of Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery**

Geri Harper currently serves as Secretary for the Friends of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery. She works hard to keep all the required paperwork in order and to make sure everything is done as it should be. This is not always an easy task. There is quite a bit of "government red tape" even in a Friends Group!

Geri serves as more than Secretary. She is a motivator and a leader. Her quiet ways and gentle smile can convince anyone to volunteer. She keeps things moving and is quick to conquer any task. She is one of the most dependable people you will ever meet. Geri has helped cook for hundreds of people who visit the hatchery, including Washington and Regional Office staff, members of Congress and their staff.

Geri recently attended a "Biologist in Training" (BiT) workshop that is designed to teach youngsters about fisheries and aquatic habitat. Geri was chosen to do this because of her love for children and her desire in teaching them to enjoy the great outdoors. She is great with the kids and a phenomenal instructor. She also plays an important part in planning and carrying out the annual fishing events held at the hatchery, such as the Special Kids Fishing Rodeo, the Senior Citizen Fishing Rodeo and the Family Fishing Festival. Without help from people like Geri, the events would not be possible. She aids in getting sponsors to donate anything from hotdogs to fishing gear! Most importantly, she is there to do anything that is needed. She truly is a friend to the hatchery.

To recognize her hard work on behalf of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and the Friends Group, Geri Harper is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

### **Jack Harper**

#### **Friends of Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery**

Jack Harper began working as a volunteer at the annual Special Kids Fishing Rodeo held in May several years ago. The Special Kids Fishing Rodeo provides severely disabled youngsters with a unique fishing opportunity. Jack helped countless youngsters catch fish, some for the first time in their lives. The look on Jack's face as he worked with these kids told it all. The kids fell in love with him and specifically asked for "Mr. Jack" to help them land a big fish. He was "hooked" after that. Jack has become an integral part of the Friends of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and now serves as President. He volunteers countless numbers of hours each year towards promoting outdoor education and fishing.

Jack generously provides annual CPR and AED training and certification to the hatchery crew at no charge. This saves the hatchery several hundred dollars each year. He is always available to help out, whether it is to clean raceways, stock fish, pick up trash, or set up for an event. He has played an important part in organizing and carrying out annual fishing events such as the Special Kids Fishing Rodeo, the Senior Citizen Fishing Rodeo, and the Family Fishing Festival. Hundreds of kids, seniors and special children attend these yearly events. Without help from people like Jack, the events would not be possible. He works hard to ensure that each event is a success.

To recognize his hard work on behalf of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and the Friends Group, Jack Harper is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

**Jim Hess**  
**Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge**

Jim Hess is an extraordinary volunteer who began his service at the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge in 2007, bringing to bear 30+ years experience as a maintenance engineer in private industry.

Jim provided over 1,000 hours of volunteer service this past year working on facilities maintenance, equipment operation, facilities and equipment repair, construction, and general Refuge monitoring. He took the initiative to complete Heavy Equipment Training and Motorboat Operators Certification courses in order to take on more Refuge projects. His completed projects include boardwalk and observation platform repair and maintenance, information kiosk repair and construction, miles of trail maintenance, sign installation and repair, assistance at public events, exotic plant control, vehicle maintenance, and road repair and maintenance. If that weren't enough, Jim dedicates himself to mowing over 100 miles of Refuge roads three times per year.

Jim, accompanied by his wife Clara, conducts weekly maintenance of public use areas and roads, and documents larger issues needing correction. In addition, Jim has dedicated many hours to general refuge monitoring often completed by walking miles through the woods and deep swamps.

It is easy to add up the value of Jim's work directly, but his time spent volunteering in turn allows Refuge employees to complete additional essential Refuge projects. More importantly, Jim is more than an essential part of our team, he is also a member of our Refuge family and a true friend.

For his gifts to the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge and the entire community, for his years of dedication, Jim Hess is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

**Bob Hynum**  
**White River National Wildlife Refuge**

Bob Hynum has volunteered at White River Refuge for over a decade and continues to be a strong and reliable volunteer. Bob has dedicated hundreds of hours to connecting children with nature by being one of the key organizers and volunteers for the Refuge's Annual Youth Deer Hunt. In addition, Bob helped to develop the Mobility Impaired Hunt for the Refuge. He has participated in every one of these hunts since the inception of these programs.

Bob selflessly labors over every aspect of the hunts. He takes vacation time from work every year to scout out placement for treestands for the youth, and then helps install each treestand. During youth hunts Bob gladly interacts with participants. He is the first person to shake a youth's hand after they harvested their first deer. He has also been observed consoling a young hunter who lost the deer of a lifetime, and helping to butcher a deer at the end of a long 14-hour day. Bob has been a wonderful spokesman for the Refuge and has modeled good sportsmanship and hunting ethics to dozens of young hunters.

Bob gives his time willingly and faithfully. He is punctual, and never needs to be reminded of special events. He maintains a pleasant disposition, never uttering a single complaint. Bob is an outstanding volunteer not just because of the work he does, but because of the example he sets for everyone.

For his dedication, enthusiasm, and for the many donated hours put forth to make all of this possible, Bob Hynum is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

**Vicki McCoy**  
**Regional Office**  
**Atlanta, GA**

Vicki McCoy has spent endless hours assisting the Southeast Region. After retiring Vicki continued to attend listening sessions and round table discussions as a volunteer and partner to help finalize the notes, develop action items, and messages related to the Listening Sessions for the Regional Directorate. She also edits and finalizes notes taken at the session. Additionally, every month she drafts the Regional Director's message in *E-Grits*. She is also the key person responsible for ensuring the Regional Director's holiday messages to all employees are well written and sent out in a timely manner. She has done this so many times that it is routine to her, but the products are always remarkable to her customers and their readers.

The Deputy Regional Director and the Regional Director always feel that they can call on Vicki for whatever needs to be written, and in fact, there are many times she anticipates a need and provides the necessary words. She cheerfully responds, often having a short turnaround time. Vicki is professional and does exemplary work and is well respected. No matter what the task is, she is always willing to go the extra mile and provide what is needed.

For Vicki's dedication, enthusiasm, talent, and for the hours of hard work she puts forth for the Region she is presented the Regional Director's Award for Volunteer Service.

## Honor Awards for Volunteer Service

**Marilyn Parrott**  
**Friends of Chattahoochee Forest**  
**National Fish Hatchery**  
**Chattahoochee Forest**  
**National Fish Hatchery**

Marilyn Parrott currently serves as Treasurer for the Friends of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery. She also served as President for several years. While serving as President, Marilyn recruited more than 50 new members. She literally went door to door delivering her famous “rice krispy bars” as incentive to join. On a national scale, Marilyn traveled to Washington, D.C. to represent the Friends of the Hatchery and to promote Friends Groups. She is an active and avid supporter of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery.

Marilyn is a friend in the truest sense to the hatchery. Even before her recognized role in the Friends group, she was always around to lend a helping hand. Whether it be cleaning raceways, planting flowers, picking up trash, helping kids fish, or whatever else needed to be done, she was there with her winning smile and magnificent, helping attitude. Marilyn is one of those people who can do anything and do it well. Her nickname at the hatchery is “cake lady” because of her delicious pound cakes.

Marilyn has played an important part in organizing and orchestrating annual fishing events held at the hatchery, such as the Special Kids Fishing Rodeo, the Senior Citizen Fishing Rodeo and the Family Fishing Festival. Hundreds of kids, seniors and special children attend these yearly events. Without help from people like Marilyn, the events would not be possible. She aids in getting sponsors to donate t-shirts, prizes, food, and most importantly, volunteer labor to help out with the events.

To recognize her hard work on behalf of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and the Friends Group, Marilyn Parrott is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

**Tony Thomas**  
**Friends of the Wolf Creek**  
**National Fish Hatchery**  
**Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery**

Tony Thomas is the Vice-President of the Friends of the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. He is responsible for the day to day management of the Gift Shop located in the Visitor Center at the Wolf Creek Hatchery. This includes supervision of the Friend’s Group administrative assistant, approving orders, establishing purchasing procedures, maintaining accounts with several vendors, and weekly cashier collections and banking needs.

Additionally, Tony supervised the development of the Friends Group website and brochure. He is the main communication link between the Service and the Friends Group. Through his leadership, the Friends group secured \$7,000 in grants this past year, paid for ads to promote the hatchery in local publications, provided refreshments and meals for many workshops and events, provided scholarships to local students for higher education and summer camps, and made sure the Friends Group provided financial support to all hatchery programs as needed. Tony participated in the planning and execution of the 22nd Annual Catch a Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby. The derby is the largest in the Southeast and one of the largest nationwide. Through his leadership and efforts the derby had over 1,650 children ages 1-15 in 2008.

For his dedication and enthusiasm in support of the Friends Group of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Tony Thomas is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

**Okefenokee Volunteers Open Wilderness**  
**Canoe and Boat Trails**

**Jackie Carter, William Hay, Walt and Sally Jetter, Evertte Sikes, Martha Szymoniak and Jack Webb**  
**Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge**

The Okefenokee Wilderness Trail Clearing Core Team, consisting of Jackie Carter, William Hay, Walt and Sally Jetter, Evertte Sikes, Martha Szymoniak, and Jack Webb, is recognized for re-opening more than 20 miles of wilderness trails following closure due to wildfires and damage from tropical storms. Collectively they have donated more than 1,100 hours to this effort. This dedicated group not only accepted a dominating physical challenge but worked tirelessly to observe Wilderness Area use protocols. They pre-planned trips to and from the worksite and used hand-tools wherever possible in order to minimize Wilderness intrusions.

In addition, in preparation to meet this challenge, these volunteers took time off from their personal schedules to participate in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s MOCC training, as well as, First Aid and CPR. Volunteers Jackie Carter, William Hay, Evertte Sikes and Jack Webb were additionally certified to use chainsaws. The Team was persistent, working through thick debris, and hanging and submerged trees. They did not give up when more trees fell during additional windstorms.

Special recognition goes to Jackie Carter for mentoring AmeriCorps groups working at the Refuge. Mr. Carter nurtured these youngsters throughout their visit, working with them side by side in the field, preparing meals, swapping yarns, and entertaining them with stories late into the night. His involvement proved to be critical when he responded to an emergency situation near Floyds Island. A dead snag fell into a motorboat seriously injuring Refuge Volunteer Coordinator, Gracie Gooch and terrifying the group. Mr. Carter removed the huge snag from the boat, assessed injuries and stabilized Gracie for the long boat trip to the East Entrance and an awaiting Emergency Management Team and ambulance.

For their dedication, enthusiasm, and for the many donated hours put forth to make all of this possible, Jackie Carter, William Hay, Walt and Sally Jetter, Evertte Sikes, Martha Szymoniak and Jack Webb are presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award for Volunteer Service.

## Honor Awards for Employees

**Victoria M. Anderson**  
**Information Technology Specialist**  
**Information Technology Division**  
**Atlanta, GA**

Vicki has distinguished herself through outstanding support to the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Vicki has served exceptionally well as the Region's Intranet Webmaster for Budget and Administration for the past year. She completed an overhaul of the entire BA website with new format, pictures, and content. She has produced the best Intranet library of B&A information within the Service. While continuing to assist with other, continuous demands being placed on our IT Systems Branch, she worked diligently to complete this project well ahead of schedule.

To enhance the Region's training opportunities for field office and RO employees, she created a virtual video library that contains on-line videos and training for topics ranging from diversity and civil rights to safety and engineering. This required converting video from various sources, editing video/audio for content and converting video to flash format. This site has eliminated the need for DVDs to be mailed to the field and provides 24 hour access to these resources. Vicki also created the Regional Office's Functional Directory Database and cold fusion website for Intranet and Internet users. This interactive site has various search options to make it easy to find a particular person or subject matter expert. She also developed a cold fusion website for field station and RO program employees to track projects in the Engineering Division. This site lists all current projects, and all details about the project. It is interactive and has the ability to search by RES number, Station name or Area. She has received numerous accolades for her Web work from within and outside the Region.

Vicki goes that extra mile to make sure that the user gets a quality product. In addition to her web work, she volunteered to create the Southeast Region graphic for the new Region 4 coin. In addition to completing an overwhelming amount of work on the B&A Intranet Library, she has pitched in where needed to help the Systems Branch meet their commitments.

Vicki enthusiastically accepts all new responsibilities and delivers results with unsurpassed expediency and quality. She is very deserving of the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Debra L. Bossie**  
**Wildlife Inspector**  
**Office of Law Enforcement**  
**Atlanta, GA**

Wildlife Inspector Debbie Bossie has distinguished herself at the Port of Atlanta in facilitating the legal trade of wildlife products and detecting illegal imports and exports of wildlife and wildlife products. She has worked tirelessly in maintaining the inspection program at the world's busiest passenger airport as the only inspector for an extended period until two vacancies could be filled and new inspectors trained. Debbie has served as the field training officer for newly hired inspectors, mentoring them and providing valuable guidance and direction, all while performing her own duties.

Debbie consistently provides a superior level of customer service by assisting the public and import/export community. She is always eager to assist importers by communicating statutory and regulatory requirements, maintaining confidence and credibility with the public and greatly increasing compliance in wildlife laws. She has received numerous commendations for her professionalism and courteous responses from the public and stakeholders.

Debbie's professional credibility and ability to develop and maintain strong partnerships has served to enhance relationships with Customs and Border Protection at the Atlanta and Charlotte airports. Her relationship has contributed greatly to the exchange of information between agencies.

For her high degree of professionalism and dedication to the Service's inspection program, Debra L. Bossie is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Carolyn Boykin**  
**Management Analyst**  
**Budget, Planning & Financial Services**  
**Atlanta, GA**

For many years, Carolyn Boykin has orchestrated the Service's best awards ceremony – the Southeast Region's Regional Director's Honor Awards program. Each year, Carolyn pours her heart and soul into the event, doing her best to reward our best – our best employees, volunteers, and partners. And each year, she delivers a ceremony better than the last, culminating in the extraordinary ceremony in 2008. Carolyn works behind the scenes throughout the year and during the event to ensure every last detail is perfect.

This effort is not a one-day event. Carolyn works meticulously for six months each year to ensure everything from the location, awards, food, service, narrative write-ups, speakers, color guard, and everything else are done to the Region's highest standards. And year after year, Carolyn sets a new standard for excellence with this event. Partners and colleagues around the country that have attended the event, compliment the Region, often many years after they have attended for the professionalism, respect, and atmosphere of sincere appreciation and awe that they experience at these events. Carolyn has raised the bar for these types of events in Regions across the country.

Carolyn Boykin has consistently demonstrated professionalism, astounding customer service, and a commitment to excellence. She is highly deserving of the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Employees

### **Johnny W. Bradford** **Biological Science Technician** **Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

Johnny Wayne Bradford is a twenty-four year career employee who “goes above and beyond” the call of duty almost daily. He efficiently completes his duties, and is always there with a smiling face to help whenever needed.

In 2008, Johnny managed all wetlands (16 units) on Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge. Johnny’s years of experience with water level manipulations, timing and oversight on water control structure maintenance have led to the development of an almost state-of-the-art management regime. This management regime provides water and foraging habitat for thousands of waterfowl, wading birds and shorebirds. Not only does Johnny apply his extensive experience at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, but he shares his expertise with others in his capacity as an instructor for numerous wetland and waterfowl classes at Mississippi State University and the University of Tennessee.

In the absence of two positions during FY 2008, Johnny accepted additional responsibilities with the water management oversight and farming in the Prisock Field moist-soil management units. As always, he excelled in the management efforts. He even managed to secure free millet and corn for the Prisock Field units, at a cost savings of over \$3,000.

Having grown up in the middle of the refuge and eventually becoming a career-employee at Noxubee has provided numerous additional benefits. Johnny’s institutional knowledge has greatly assisted many refuge managers and assistants. In addition, he has greatly aided the red-cockaded woodpecker recovery work, banded thousands of waterfowl, captured many species of animal life for research efforts, helped restock refuge lakes and led the nuisance species control efforts.

For these endeavors and everything he has done to manage all wetlands on Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Johnny W. Bradford is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

### **William B. Brooks, Jr.** **Fish and Wildlife Biologist** **Ecological Services, Jacksonville, FL**

Bill Brooks is a Recovery Biologist in the Jacksonville Field Office. He has the national lead for several listed species, including the wood stork, as well as the regional lead for whooping cranes.

In 2008, Bill helped facilitate a landmark decision by the Whooping Crane Recovery Team to establish a second wintering site at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. He then worked tirelessly with the refuge to negotiate the maze of regulatory paperwork and construction requirements needed to complete the project in time for the 2008 migration.

He was invited to participate in a C2S2 (Conservation Centers for Species Survival) workshop to provide information on breeding flock and research needs for whooping crane recovery. He published the proceedings of the 2005 Wood Stork Ecology Symposium in *Waterbirds*, a peer reviewed scientific journal. He worked closely with regulatory staff to develop a “Wood Stork key” to streamline section 7 consultations with the Corps of Engineers. He developed an idea and secured funding for 11 infrared motion triggered trail cameras to survey for endangered beach mice, the elusive Florida salt marsh vole and other hard-to-find listed species. Bill also managed to secure funding to purchase data logging VhF receiver systems to establish remote tracking stations along the whooping crane migration route to assist in monitoring.

He completed three complex (court ordered) five year reviews on the Atlantic salt marsh snake, Florida salt marsh vole, and Squirrel Chimney cave shrimp. He also played a key role in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s structured decision making analysis regarding the continued release of whooping crane chicks into the Florida non-migratory flock.

For his creative and clever problem-solving skills coupled with his ability to mobilize partners for the recovery of whooping cranes and other species, William B. Brooks is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

### **Tiaujanna P. Burnett** **Law Enforcement Support Assistant** **Office of Law Enforcement, Atlanta, GA**

Law Enforcement Support Assistant Tiaujanna Burnett has distinguished herself at the Office of Law Enforcement’s Regional Office in providing outstanding support to both management and field offices. Her performance in her position is key to the success of the Office of Law Enforcement’s investigative program.

In the past fiscal year, Tiaujanna has been responsible for the administrative oversight of more than 800 active investigations. As the Case Management Specialist, Tiaujanna has the overwhelming task to manage the endless flow of investigative reports generated by the field staff. She monitors all facets of the case management system, ensuring proper entry of seized and forfeited property, and tracks cases referred to the Regional Solicitor.

Tiaujanna is responsible for ensuring all required documentation for approval of undercover investigations is complete and formatted in accordance with policy. She tracks expiration dates and notifies the field on upcoming deadlines. She also manages the Regional Undercover Credit Card Program, Undercover Social Security program and the Confidential Informant database for the Southeast Region’s Office of Law Enforcement.

For her hard work and dedication to the Service’s Office of Law Enforcement program, Tiaujanna Burnett is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

**Peter V. Campbell**  
**Wildlife Biologist**  
**Ecological Services, Raleigh, NC**

Pete Campbell has demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership in putting Strategic Habitat Conservation principles into practice at the local, regional and national levels. For many years, Pete has been a driving force behind the North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership. This multi-party landscape partnership received national recognition in 2007 for helping Fort Bragg achieve its red-cockaded woodpecker recovery goal five years ahead of schedule.

Over the past year, Pete has demonstrated exceptional individual initiative and leadership in expanding the concepts of partnership and collaboration to the regional and national levels through his involvement on the Eastern North Carolina/Southeastern Virginia (ENC/SEVA) Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) Team and the National SHC Technical Advisory Team. Adoption of the SHC framework has been critical to the long-term success of the Agency in meeting the natural resource challenges of the 21st century. Pete has devoted countless hours to furthering the mission of the Service relative to SHC. He has helped lead efforts of the ENC/SEVA Team to implement the SHC framework at the local level and to establish the South Atlantic Landscape Conservation Collaborative.

He also performed a 30-day detail with the Science Advisor to the Director in the Washington Office to organize and coordinate SHC at the National level. He played a key role in helping to plan and conduct a series of briefings in April 2008 that were critically important to building understanding, trust and support from key partners and to promoting a landscape approach to conserving fish and wildlife.

To recognize his hard work on behalf of the Agency and his dedication to natural resources, Peter V. Campbell is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Rockwell Chesser**  
**Heavy Equipment Operator**  
**Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge**

Rockwell (Rocky) Chesser is an Heavy Equipment Operator at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge where he has worked for more than 13 years. Over the years, Rocky has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, a highly effective working relationship with others, superb knowledge of heavy equipment, facility maintenance databases (SAMMS) and management protocols and an outstanding work ethic. Rocky is considered by his co-workers as someone who is knowledgeable, level-headed, and capable of addressing situations and potential problems on a day-to-day basis.

As a leader, Rocky demonstrates these characteristics as evident in his willingness to take on additional responsibilities outside the scope of his position. Rocky is a member of the Regional Heavy Equipment Operators Training Committee, Co-chair of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Safety Committee, Okefenokee Emergency Management Systems Coordinator, Okefenokee HazMat Coordinator, Heavy Equipment Operator Trainer, Type 3 Burn Boss, and Okefenokee Computer Management Team.

During the 2007 post-fire rehabilitation projects, Rocky took on the responsibility to make sure that all heavy equipment projects were completed by ordering materials, coordinating heavy equipment operator details from surrounding refuges and delivery of equipment, which resulted in more than 35 miles of roadway and culvert replacement.

Rocky has been instrumental in the acquisition of heavy equipment and vehicles due to his willingness and capability to work with the Regional Office Heavy Equipment Coordinator and General Contracting. He orchestrated the removal of excess property and submitted specifications for new equipment and vehicles to the Regional Office utilizing appropriate databases.

Rocky is a dedicated, hard working employee who genuinely cares about the Service, the refuge, and his co-workers. With this in mind, Rockwell Chesser is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Darryl Clark**  
**Fish and Wildlife Biologist**  
**Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA**

In FY 2008, Darryl provided exceptional leadership on a number of field office efforts and initiatives. He often goes above and beyond the call of duty as the Department of the Interior representative on the multi-agency Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Technical Committee, contributing to the many difficult decisions regarding effective coastal ecosystem restoration.

Throughout the past year, Darryl's leadership on the Technical Committee has been extraordinary, as he directly and affirmatively addressed several contentious issues including future funding capacity, numerous project budget increases, project selection, policy guidance, and the always difficult task of project deauthorization. In his capacity as the Department of the Interior representative, Darryl excels at briefing and advising the Department of the Interior's Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act Task Force representatives. He has devoted his over six years to this task, a tenure transcending several task force representatives, including the Regional Director and two field supervisors. His briefings are well known for their thorough, organized, and accurate representation of issues, firmly supported by sound science.

Additionally, he serves as the team leader for an interagency coastal restoration planning team for restoration activities in southwestern Louisiana. Darryl was the driving force behind the successful completion of the office's Five-Year Strategic Plan and also provided excellent and effective mentorship to junior staff and student interns; always listening and extending respect through thoughtful discussion and delegation of challenging assignments. Through his work ethic, dedication, and energetic nature, Darryl provides a fine example for the junior staff.

In recognition of his high degree of dedication and devotion to the Fish and Wildlife Resource Conservation and those who hold the future, Darryl Clark is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Employees

### **Martin V. Coffman** **Refuge Law Enforcement Officer** **Jackson, MS**

During 2008, Martin V. (Vic) Coffman went above and beyond his Zone Officer duties by providing invaluable assistance to the Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Complex. Beginning in March 2008, all dual function Officers for the Complex relinquished their law enforcement duties leaving one full time Officer to cover the seven refuges within the Complex.

In May 2008, our full time Officer transferred to another station leaving no law enforcement personnel for the stations. Vic became the *defacto* Officer due to our needs. There were several major incidents that happened that Vic immediately handled. These included an attempted murder, kidnapping and rape case on Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge, corporate trespass issues, agricultural crop trespass, issuance adjudication of a citation issued to a high ranking State official, and an immediate response to a possible night shooting on Morgan Brake National Wildlife Refuge that could have put two female college research students in danger.

He set up successful law enforcement details for the Complex's hunting program, one of the largest and most complex in the nation, and started an outreach program to the Mississippi Conservation Officers and local law enforcement to have assistance in refuge patrols and protection.

In addition, he performed routine refuge patrols, assisted the Project Leader in identifying needs for law enforcement supplies, provided acquisition requests and specifications for purchases of needed law enforcement gear, and provided refuge outreach to visiting hunters.

Vic displayed a true cooperative attitude and is an exemplary model of how the Zone Officer position and Refuge station personnel should work together to accomplish what is needed at the field level. His dedication to his work has helped alleviate our loss of law enforcement Officers and has provided a vital need in our working relationships with the various state and local law enforcement agencies.

For his untiring efforts and inspiring accomplishments toward the conservation of natural resources, Zone Officer Martin V. Coffman is presented the Regional Directors' Honor Award.

### **Theresa (Resee) M. Collins** **Education Specialist** **Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA**

As a collateral duty to her primary responsibilities, Resee served as the Southeast Region's Migratory Bird Program outreach and education lead, gaining regional and national respect for her input, organizational skills, and tireless work ethic.

Resee developed myriad outreach documents and other materials such as fact sheets and student activity sheets; developed and presented a number of programs to wildlife rehabilitators and raptor associations; and served as the Regional liaison to the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association and International Wildlife Rehabilitation Council.

Resee was an active participant on the nationally lauded planning committee for the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Federal Duck Stamp Contest held at the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR in Sanibel, Florida; led all facets of the 2008 Georgia Junior Duck Stamp Program, including coordinating the contest at the regional office, student correspondence, media contacts, and the subsequent statewide "tour;" and served as the Migratory Bird Program representative on the Southeast Region's new Children and Nature Working Group.

All the while, Resee was a key member of the Southeast Region's permit branch that achieved the nation's highest "turnaround" percentage of number of permits issued within 30 days of receipt of a completed application. This is a significant endeavor given that Resee is one of just three employees who manage more than 3,500 permits each year.

For her exceptional performance with such identifiable benefits, Resee is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Sarah C. Dawsey** **Fish and Wildlife Biologist** **Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge**

For the past 22 years, Biologist Sarah Dawsey has remained steadfastly dedicated to her work on Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge. As the sole biologist on the refuge, Sarah's duties include managing an endangered loggerhead sea turtle inventory seven days a week, and monitoring, and relocating nests for six months out of the year.

Unable to accomplish the full scope of recovery activities for this rare species, Sarah formed long-lasting and productive partnerships for this labor-intensive initiative. These partnerships involve Service staff at the Charleston Ecological Services office, employees of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the South Carolina Aquarium, the refuge Friends in the SEWEE Association, and a local homeowners association.

In 2008, the Refuge was without a refuge manager and project leader for more than six months. Undeterred, Sarah stepped up to the management challenge, ensuring that work on the Refuge continued and that partnerships were sustained throughout the transition. She worked with the Refuge maintenance staff to ensure day-to-day maintenance activities were accomplished. Sarah worked long hours for an extended period of time to accomplish Refuge priorities without asking for additional compensation or complaining about her workload.

In addition, Sarah has invested considerable effort to network with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, various universities, and several graduate students to obtain a number of scientific research studies on the Refuge that enhance our understanding of key coastal systems and species.

Sarah's diligence, determination, and strong work ethic have been the primary reasons that Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge continues to support one of the most significant nesting areas for the northern sub-population of loggerhead sea turtles north of Florida. Her hard work and dedication warrant the recognition of the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Carlos Echevarria  
Hatchery Manager  
Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery**

Carlos Echevarria continues to do an exemplary job for Fisheries as Hatchery Manager at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery. The Warm Springs hatchery is part of the overall Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center. The knowledge and leadership Carlos brings to the Center have been critical in addressing restoration and recovery efforts for aquatic species such as striped bass, alligator gar, robust redhorse sucker, lake sturgeon, and shortnose sturgeon. Additionally, Carlos has been pivotal in addressing freshwater mussel recovery of the ACF river system impacted by drought conditions. Carlos' understanding of the urgency and timely action has made him a valuable asset in these recovery efforts.

Carlos' professional credibility and his ability to develop strong partnerships have served to enhance overall efforts in the restoration and recovery of species such as the robust redhorse sucker and the lake sturgeon. Working with both of these species at the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery has shown great success for reintroduction and recovery actions.

A special talent that Carlos brings to the job is his knowledge in developing and constructing systems to address water quality problems. Carlos has designed numerous systems to accommodate various technology needs at the hatchery and also at the Fish Technology Center. His special knowledge has helped other hatcheries, both Federal and State, in dealing with water quality problems and issues.

Because of his tireless efforts in restoring and recovering aquatic species, Carlos Echevarria is recognized with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Katherine D. Francis  
Administrative Officer  
Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA**

As this office's Administrative Officer, Kathy has consistently demonstrated outstanding proficiency in management-support with budget formulation, management, execution, database tracking, and comprehensive customer service in support of all Ecological Service functions. Kathy possesses exceptional organization and analytical skills demonstrated by her ability to quickly identify problems and recommend resolutions, never responding with less than "completed staff work." She thoroughly and dependably monitors documents and tracks Military Interagency Purchase Requests; accurately and effectively tracks all office budget allocations; expeditiously processes all obligations and expenditures; and closed out the FY with no outstanding obligations and miniscule residual balances seldom greater than 1% of allocated funding for a budget of approximately \$4.4 million.

Kathy demonstrates exceptional attention to detail and possesses strong communication skills which greatly contribute to effective budgetary decision-support in addition to valuable region-wide support to other field offices and to regional administrative staff and management. This fiscal year, Kathy's attention to fiscal issues was profound as she balanced an especially limited budget and unpredictable Military Interagency Purchase Request funding with several workforce transitions, including the delayed transfer of three resource management staff to transfer-funded positions, Private Lands cost overruns, a costly PCS action which exceeded \$110K for the new Deputy Supervisor; implementation of GovTrip and Quicktime; and orientation, training and mentoring of a new Office Automation Assistant.

Due to Kathy's dedicated contributions, the Lafayette Ecological Services Office operates with a high degree of credibility and at peak efficiency. She facilitates maximum utilization of available resources to best meet our mission. In recognition for her high degree of dedication and total commitment to the Service mission, Kathy Francis is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Paul B. Gideon, Jr.  
Wildlife Refuge Manager  
Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge**

Paul Gideon has served as the Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge Manager for four years and has consistently shown dedication for the resources of that refuge. Paul has been instrumental in developing partnerships with neighboring land owners to acquire additional parcels of land within the acquisition boundary. Currently, Paul is working on developing land for timber trade that would acquire an additional 900+ acres for the refuge. This trade partners the Service with The Nature Conservancy and the local land owner, and could end up being a \$3 million deal for the refuge.

Paul has worked tirelessly with all neighbors to build positive working relationships, foster good land stewardship, and acquire additional land within the refuge acquisition boundary. In addition to the land for timber trade mentioned above, he is currently working with two other cooperative neighboring landowners to buy or receive as donations additional land parcels. Each of these land deals will add bottomland hardwood timber to the current refuge acreage.

In addition to his land dealings, Paul has been an excellent ambassador of the Refuge System to the local community. Paul has initiated several programs for local schools to educate the students about the refuge and natural environment and has written and received grant monies to support onsite education opportunities at Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

Paul routinely goes above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the refuge is a safe and enjoyable place for the public to visit. In addition to his dual function duties as a law enforcement officer and refuge manager, Paul gets out on the equipment to grade roads, clear trails, and mow and maintain the facilities. Paul has accomplished all these management goals at the 27,000 acre Pond Creek National Wildlife Refuge with little additional staff.

You will be hard pressed to find someone who is more dedicated to the mission of the Service and works harder for the Refuge System than Paul Gideon. For these accomplishments, Paul B. Gideon, Jr. is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Employees

**Karen J. Herrington**  
**Fish Biologist**  
**Panama City Fisheries Resource Office**

As a Fisheries Biologist at the Panama City Fishery Resources Office, Karen has been involved in a number of extraordinary efforts that have truly benefited the aquatic resources in the Southeast.

Karen played a critical role when she had to consult with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on their Exceptional Drought Operations plan in the ACF River Basin. As a member of the Exceptional Drought Operations "Team Mussel," Karen helped complete a consultation that normally is allotted a 135-day time frame in only two weeks. She did this without sacrificing the quality of the science and the reasoning that went into the final product. In order to accurately assess effects, Karen played an important role on the team that first gathered real time data on the status and location of listed mussels in the action area, and updated the status of the species. She then reviewed the literature and helped write recommendations for monitoring and other reasonable and prudent measures. As a member of "Team Mussel," Karen worked seamlessly with staff from the Mobile District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and completed work in an exemplary fashion in record time.

In addition to these duties, Karen also serves as the Service's on-the-ground coordinator of the Gulf striped bass activities performed by Service Fisheries Offices and the Natural Resource agencies of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Her management efforts have also been exemplary with regard to broodfish collections, stocking recommendations, and organization of the annual Gulf Striped Bass Workshop and Gulf Striped Bass Technical Team Meeting.

At this year Biologist Conference, Karen was recognized as the Biologist of the Year for Fisheries. To recognize Karen's excellent work in aquatic resource management and her dedication in all she does, Karen Herrington is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Eric S. Johnson**  
**Forester**  
**Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge**

Eric S. Johnson has provided outstanding service in 2008 to the Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex in the realm of strategic land conservation. He reinstated critically-needed and biologically sound bottomland hardwood silvicultural treatments on Cache River National Wildlife Refuge after a cessation of forest harvesting activities following the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Two management compartments were treated to enhance forest habitat for trust resources while incorporating safeguards to protect against any detriment to potential endangered species habitat.

Eric helped grow Cache River National Wildlife Refuge and Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuge by providing technical assistance typically expected of a realty specialist (level 1 contaminant surveys, landowner contacts, deed research, survey works, etc.) in acquisition of several key parcels totaling over 1,000 acres. He also culminated a three-year effort of aggressive kudzu control and habitat reclamation on Cache River National Wildlife Refuge for a fraction of the cost of a contractor's fees through the use of interns and volunteers. Eric's efforts did not stop at the boundary of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge. He also performed monitoring of forest habitat conditions of Bald Knob, Big Lake, and Wapanocca National Wildlife Refuges that will lead to biologically-based forest habitat management regimes on these refuges.

Eric Johnson is an exemplary employee who personifies the knowledge, dedication, motivation, and innovation to achieve that which we idealize in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is an example who provides inspiration to other employees to strive to accomplish great things for the common good. He contributes meaningfully to the future well-being of our trust resources and the public we serve.

To recognize his hard work, dedication to service and innovative solutions on behalf of Cache River National Wildlife Refuge, Eric S. Johnson is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Steven B. Klett**  
**Wildlife Refuge Manager**  
**Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge**

Steven Klett has served as the Refuge Manager and sole employee of the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge for 12 years. He has provided outstanding leadership in habitat restoration, species recovery, and public outreach.

Steven coordinates all endangered species monitoring at Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, with special emphasis on the American crocodile, the Key Largo woodrat, and Key Largo cottonmouse. Additionally, Steven provides technical assistance to various agencies and researchers regarding status and distribution, environmental impacts, and effective mitigation for the endangered Stock Island tree snail, Keys tree cactus, eastern indigo snake, and Schaus swallowtail butterfly.

Steven has coordinated several innovative recovery projects to benefit the Key Largo woodrat, including construction of 80 artificial nest structures (50% subsequently occupied or used by woodrats), and installation of video cameras to remotely monitor behavior and activity patterns of woodrats in these structures. Since 2007, at least six exotic Burmese pythons have been discovered on north Key Largo, at least three of which contained the remains of the endangered woodrat.

Steven has fostered cost-effective partnerships to restore the globally-imperiled tropical hardwood hammock ecosystem. In 2007, he negotiated a novel project with the Florida Department of Transportation and its contractor, Granite Construction, to utilize limestone-based fill material from the U.S. 1 Improvement Project to fill a 2.16 acre abandoned limestone rock mining pit that presently displaces and fragments tropical hardwood hammock. Steven has also contributed to the conservation of native habitats by maintaining a rigorous continual effort to control invasive exotic plants on Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent right-of-ways.

This honor award nomination is long overdue for Steven, considering his continuous outstanding performance as a dedicated employee of the Southeast Region of the National Wildlife Refuge System. His hard work and dedication warrant the recognition of the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Charles L. McGee**  
**Land Surveyor**  
**Realty, Atlanta, GA**

During 2008, Leon McGee's work was central to the success of the land acquisition program of the Southeast Region's realty division. Leon's expertise in surveys, maps and land conveyances is invaluable to ensuring that lands the Service acquires have sound and accurate legal descriptions, and that the Service receives good insurable titles to those lands.

At Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi, Leon was able to compile and decipher legal descriptions from numerous deeds and surveys encompassing a 4,500 acre tract of land and a complex title history. His ability to transform this complicated set of documents into a single description of the property that was acceptable to both the land owner and the Service was remarkable. At the newly established Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge in Mississippi, Leon was able to take somewhat incomplete historical land data and transform it into a current legal description that will likely withstand scrutiny for acceptable land conveyance standards.

Leon always strives to get the job done right the first time. At Red River National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana, Leon's work will allow an NGO partner to acquire a property for future conveyance to the Service. Before the Service acquires the property, a survey will be performed to ensure that the Service and the NGO acquire a clear title, and avert potential future boundary disputes with adjoining property owners. Acquiring land for the Service has tangible and measurable results, none of which would be possible without the expertise of people like Leon who provide necessary support to the realty division long before land deals are closed.

Leon McGee is a dedicated, hard-working professional who constantly demonstrates his commitment to the Service mission. In recognition of his commitment and his accomplishments, Charles L. McGee is recognized with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Christopher R. Murphy**  
**Biological Science Technician**  
**Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery**

Chris Murphy has been a Biological Science Technician at the Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery for over 13 years. Chris has been a very consistent and reliable employee at the hatchery, making his experience and expertise invaluable in the hatchery meeting its fish production goals. He has taken a lead role in culturing several threatened and endangered fish species such as the Relict Darter and Barrens Topminnow. Chris has accepted these additional duties and used his many years of experience to ensure the success of this high priority program.

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery traditionally experiences poor water quality in the fall due to the turnover of Lake Cumberland. To add to the problem, for the past two years, the hatchery has had to pump water from the river to the hatchery to maintain fish stocks due to the lowering of Lake Cumberland for repairs to Wolf Creek Dam. Through his extensive knowledge and leadership, problems from these two events have been minimal and the hatchery has been able to meet its annual fishery mitigation obligations. Without the dedicated experience of employees such as Chris Murphy this program could be in jeopardy.

Chris has always been a dependable and dedicated employee who has consistently worked to achieve the Service's goals and mission. For his exceptional performance with identifiable benefits to the Fisheries Program, Christopher R. Murphy is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Vivian Negron-Ortiz**  
**Botanist**  
**Ecological Services, Panama City, FL**

Dr. Vivian Negron-Ortiz arrived in the Panama City Field Office just two years ago with a passion to elevate plant conservation as a priority for northwest Florida. As the Lead Recovery Botanist for 10 species of threatened and endangered plants, she quickly began to learn more about these plants and to network with the agencies that have management responsibilities for the species recovery. She has already made significant progress toward recovery and preventing extinction of several plant species.

Vivian has completed five Five-year Status Reviews and one Recovery Plan. Her background in research and her common sense and realistic approach have enabled her to form important cooperative partnerships within Florida, Alabama, and South Carolina. Understanding the limitations of the Endangered Species Act in protection of plant species, Vivian has developed creative ways to promote plant recovery including working with private, state, and federal partners, applying and receiving grant awards, and assisting in and collaborating on research with the Smithsonian Institution and other research facilities.

Her willingness to share information, set up monitoring programs, and educate partners on the importance of strategic habitat conservation for plant recovery has resulted in range-wide recovery efforts been implemented concurrently. Due to Vivian's efforts, our partners have adopted new standardized monitoring protocol, invested in plant research, initiated ex-situ sanctuary populations, and improved prescribed fire for plant recovery.

For her dedication to landscape conservation and her enthusiastic approach to engaging in new partners for recovery priorities, we present Dr. Negron-Ortiz the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Employees

**Debra K. Pettibone**  
**Law Enforcement Support Assistant**  
**Office of Law Enforcement, Nashville, TN**

Law Enforcement Support Assistant Debra Pettibone has served the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in an exemplary manner.

Debra's willingness to devote time and effort toward improving the voucher and time and attendance processing systems led to increased productivity by other Resident Agents in Charge district employees, along with the ability to effectively record unique hours of work at our Ports of Entry, including flexible tours of duty that involve night, weekend, and compressed work shifts.

Debra provided expertise and commitment toward the transcription of numerous audio recordings to facilitate federal prosecution of six defendants identified through Operation Board. This Region 4 undercover investigation, involving several OLE operatives, required the secret recording of conversations in very unique situations and surroundings, often complicated by the inclusion of trade terms, foreign accents, and the need to specifically identify individuals speaking together. She volunteered her services to this critical assignment, saving the Service extensive transcription costs, and maintaining a Chain of Custody for evidence that would eventually be deemed critical to successful federal prosecution by the United States Attorney's Office.

Ms. Pettibone is a model of professionalism and dedication to the Service, public and the staff she supports. For her efforts Debra K. Pettibone is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Rosla G. Plant**  
**Park Ranger**  
**Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center**

Rosla Plant is responsible for the non-budget administrative needs for the four organizational units within the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center: Fish Technology Center; Fish Health Center; Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, and Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery. Rosla provides dedicated service at the highest degree of quality. Her knowledge of policies and procedures is second to none and is viewed by her peers and superiors as an expert in many areas. Rosla is a true professional and displays a very positive work attitude in all that she does.

Additionally, Rosla functions as the Park Ranger for the Center and has been effective in organizing and administering a Friends Group and related community-based activities for the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery. Because of Rosla's initiative and open-mindedness, Warm Springs has been able to showcase the many types of Service activities in Fisheries, Refuges, Law Enforcement and Ecological Services. Communicating with the public has been a focus area for Rosla. Last year Rosla completed some especially noteworthy events, including providing a field day experience for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Atlanta; providing opportunities for fishing - related experience for Camp Sunshine for Children with Cancer; and coordinating efforts for Warm Springs to serve as the host location for the Annual Winter Bird Count.

For her dedication and her many accomplishments, Rosla Plant is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Mary M. Powell**  
**Grants Management Assistant**  
**Division of Federal Assistance**  
**Atlanta, GA**

Mary Powell has made significant contributions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division of Federal Assistance. She handles unexpected challenges in a calm, controlled manner; has exceptional leadership skills, and quietly manages an impressive workload with exceptional dependability.

Mary completes numerous administrative responsibilities that are critical to the success of the Federal Assistance program partnership with State G/F Agencies. She maintains accurate administrative records of individual state license certifications, annual certifications of spending, annual assurances, and certified signature records of 17 state agencies allowing them to remain eligible for Federal Assistance funds. Mary acknowledges receipt of over 300 grant requests per year and enters required information into a FAIMS database to initiate the fiscal and biological review process. Prior to final approval and obligation of grant funds, Mary reviews each individual approval letter to assure accuracy of the effective date, funding amount, and correct grant program subactivity. Even more significant, Mary annually receives over 300 time sensitive grant accomplishment performance reports and initiates the review process. She enters required information into a FAIMS database to initiate a review process that determines the acceptability of work commensurate with the grant objectives. She finalizes a variety of correspondence and Corrective Action Plans related to OIG Audits.

Mary has coordinated the selection, ordering, and encryption of laptop computers with Information Technology to facilitate telework opportunities for FA staff. She has worked with IT to identify and select a vendor and the adequate model of a digital filing system compatible with our FAIMS system. She has worked with our property custodial officer to update and maintain an accurate property inventory. Since July of 2008, she has performed all of these duties while also accomplishing many of the duties of a vacant position.

Mary's accomplishments reflect both her knowledge and commitment to the Fish and Wildlife Service and our State grantee partners; Mary M. Powell is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Takako Sato**  
**Refuge Operations Specialist**  
**Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge**

In 2007, Takako Sato, Refuge Operations Specialist for the Florida Gulf Coast National Wildlife Refuges, led the Service's organization, and conducted of the 12th Annual Southwest Florida Exotic Species Workshop. Takako seized the opportunity to work with Florida Atlantic University and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida to bring together professional scientists from throughout south Florida to the Exotics Species Workshop. She scheduled the workshop to dovetail with the Benedict Science Symposium, a scientific forum on environmental issues in Southwest Florida. This scheduling resulted in an expanded, two-day workshop that provided increased opportunities for networking between land managers and restoration scientists.

The Exotic Species Workshop that Takako and her interagency committee organized focused on critical topics to mitigate invasive species impacts in southwest Florida. One hundred and fifteen professionals participated. The speakers addressed vital topics such as biological control agents of exotic plants, treatment recording on a regional and state basis useful for consolidating treatments, early detection procedures of new exotic species and several examples of new exotic plant and animal arrivals. The workshop highlighted future establishment of a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area for southwest Florida.

The Workshop contributed to the building of a foundation to assist land managers in combating exotic species in southwest Florida, and set the stage for additional workshops and continued stakeholder communications. Through Takako's efforts, the Service's leadership in exotic species management has been advanced and it's pre-eminence as a leader in south Florida wildlife management has been highlighted.

For an inspirational supply of enthusiasm, professionalism, and assistance in many arenas of the Service, Takako Sato is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**William R. Wayman**  
**Director**  
**Warm Springs Fish Technology Center**

William "Bill" Wayman has provided exceptional leadership as the Director of the Warm Springs Fish Technology Center. The Fish Technology Center is part of the overall Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center. Over the last ten years Bill has been engaged in cryogenic studies of fish sperm that have advanced science and have provided opportunities for biologists working to manage critical fish populations and conserving imperiled species. The culmination of this work was realized when the Southeast Region developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Agriculture that allows the Service to archive cryo-preserved genetic resources within their Aquatic Animal Germ-plasm Storage Center located in Fort Collins, Colorado. At that Center live sperm from different fish are being maintained at no cost to the Service, until the need to retrieve and use the sperm — whether that is in ten years, one hundred years, or a thousand years. This is extremely important in the context of climate change and impacts to aquatic resources.

Bill has been very innovative and creative in addressing critical aquatic resource management and fish technology needs. The genetics component of the Fish Technology Center has been a cornerstone in evaluating genetic diversity of populations of fish and mussels that are being impacted by the ongoing drought in the Southeastern United States. Under Bill's leadership, this component will be part of the Service's toolbox to respond to accelerating climate change and its impact on fish and wildlife resources.

William R. Wayman's exceptional contribution to the Service and to the resource makes him very worthy as a recipient of the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Crystal T. Thomas**  
**Administrative Support Assistant**  
**Chattahoochee Forest**  
**National Fish Hatchery**

Crystal Thomas has served as Program Assistant at the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery for the past several years. During this time Crystal has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Crystal not only performs her day-to-day administrative duties in an exemplary manner, she is also the first person to volunteer to take on more. This past year she personally lined up more than 100 volunteers to help with the three separate fishing events held at the hatchery. The three fishing events provided outdoor education and recreation experiences to hundreds of children, some who are severely disabled and do not have outdoor recreational opportunities.

Crystal has also provided leadership and mentoring to the Friends of the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery. Through her work and dedication to this group, she has managed to make the Friends group much more successful. In addition, she has worked with the local Trout Unlimited group in several "Trout in the Classroom" endeavors which has gained national attention. She has also worked with several local schools in utilizing the Biologist In Training (BIT) program.

Crystal is an extremely dedicated and hard working employee who inspires enthusiasm in other employees, promotes a positive image of the Service, and is willing to go the extra mile. To recognize her outstanding performance, Crystal T. Thomas is recognized with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Employees

### **Brett B. Wehrle** **Wildlife Refuge Manager** **Central Louisiana Refuges Complex**

Brett B. Wehrle is the exemplary Project Leader of the Central Louisiana Refuges Complex. He successfully met a number of challenges during his first year at the complex, addressing a number of difficult and sensitive management issues within the complex.

Brett worked closely with the Solicitor's Office, the Regional Office, and landowners to successfully resolve long-standing access issues and purchase issues at the Grand Cote and Lake Ophelia National Wildlife Refuges. He coordinated numerous responses to congressional inquiries relating to these challenging issues.

He also made habitat development and improvements, revising the Complex cooperative farming program which provides substantial benefits to wintering waterfowl and other refuge wildlife. Brett directed the use of Refuge and equipment to plant 320 acres of quality agricultural foods for waterfowl, effectively increasing the efficiency of the land. He then coordinated with several NGO's to establish a plan to restore bottomland hardwoods on 1500 acres of refuge lands which historically had been part of the cooperative farming program. His other accomplishments include the restoration of a 140 acre moist soil unit on Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge, and coordinating the reconstruction and improvement of numerous levees and water control structures on Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge. Brett acquired funding to treat 400 acres of water bodies on Lake Ophelia and Catahoula National Wildlife Refuges that were heavily infested with multiple invasive plant species.

In addition to habitat management, acquisition and access issues, Brett also addressed public use. A key example was the hosting of a first ever kids' fishing rodeo at Grand Cote National Wildlife Refuge. The event was well received by the local community, a great success, and there are plans to make the rodeo an annual event.

To recognize his many excellent accomplishments and his outstanding dedication to the National Wildlife System, Brett B. Wehrle is recognized with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Barbara D. West** **Realty Specialist** **Realty, Atlanta, GA**

Barbara West is an outstanding contributor and supporter in response to the damage and destruction to Louisiana in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Federal government authorized and directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to design and construct a levee and floodwall enlargement through a portion of the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge in Orleans Parish, Louisiana. The project required the divestiture of approximately five acres of land in exchange for another property that the Service was acquiring at Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. Barbara has been working on this exchange since January 2007. It wasn't until August 2008 when the Corps of Engineers finalized their construction plans, with the intent of beginning construction in November 2008.

Barbara has worked extensively with multiple parties including the Service offices, the Department of the Interior Solicitor's Office, the State of Louisiana real estate division and legal counsel, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' real estate division. She has coordinated all aspects of this exchange including clarifying the Service ownership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, drafting multiple documents for review by the Solicitor's Office, orchestrating briefings for the Regional Office leadership, and conducting teleconferences with the State of Louisiana, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Service's Solicitor's Office.

Barbara has demonstrated her dedication to the realty profession by working hard to meet the U.S. Corps of Engineers' deadline for this construction project and doing so in accordance with the Federal land acquisition rules and regulations

For her excellent management skills, her accomplishments in numerous projects, and her professionalism, Barbara D. West is recognized with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Elizabeth J. Whaley** **Refuge Law Enforcement Officer** **Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge**

On the evening of November 21, 2008, Jane Whaley performed her duties in a way that saved the life of a capsized boat operator, and reflected positively on the Service and the professionalism of refuge officers. Jane received a call from the Kennedy Space Center dispatch regarding a possible drowning and lost boater in Mosquito Lagoon within the Refuge boundary. She immediately returned to the Refuge, acquired a refuge boat, and began coordinating actions with Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission officers.

Upon arrival at the boat ramp, Jane quickly assessed the situation, collected pertinent information from witnesses and developed a search and rescue plan. She knew time was critical as the boater had been in the water for over four hours. Conditions were dark with 25 mph winds, which meant hazardous conditions for all involved. Her knowledge of the waters and patterns used by boaters was critical to the search. The search party included Volusia and Brevard County helicopters, Kennedy Space Center personnel, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission officers, and Officer Whaley. By deploying the Refuge boat and a Commission boat, the rescuers were able to vector onto the capsized boat and rescue the boater. The boater survived and was kept overnight for observation in the hospital. Unfortunately, his dog expired before the rescue. All involved recognized that Officer Whaley and her actions were essential to making this a successful rescue.

Due to the critical role she played to help save the life of a capsized boat operator, Elizabeth J. Whaley is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Deborah F. Young**  
**Regional Web Manager**  
**External Affairs, Atlanta, GA**

Debbie Young made crucial contributions in 2008 to the Southeast Region's communications efforts, its web site, and ongoing efforts to improve visitor experience at [www.fws.gov/southeast/](http://www.fws.gov/southeast/).

When it comes to customer service, Debbie is committed like no other. She has built a long track record serving the needs of our web managers in field stations across the region as well as here in the Regional Office. She represents our Region on the Service's web council. In 2008, she led our effort working with many field stations to take huge steps ensuring our web site meet the latest requirements related to accessibility of our web pages to those with handicaps.

She spends about 50 percent of her time serving our resource programs and field stations with modifications to their pages.

Moreover, in 2008 she led an effort to examine our web site and find ways to improve visitor experience and take into account the latest research related to web design. She completed the project and many of its results are being implemented now. In addition, she is coordinating a broad range of certification requirements related to 19 new standards adopted by the Department of the Interior.

In the middle of web certification and the web enhancement project, Debbie found a way to help the Southeast Region move forward on three major priorities: building a web presence for the Region's climate change effort, its strategic habitat conservation implementation effort, and enhancing our connecting people with nature effort on *E-Grits*.

To recognize her extraordinary commitment to helping us use web technology more effectively, Deborah F. Young is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

**Lora L. Zimmerman**  
**Fish and Wildlife Biologist**  
**Ecological Services, Charleston, SC**

Over the past five years, Lora has made outstanding contributions towards threatened and endangered species recovery in South Carolina. She frequently goes above and beyond the call of duty to identify information needs and address endangered species issues by creating a cooperative working effort between Federal and State agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academia. She has actively participated in reviews of various commercial and residential developments, showing a willingness to work with developers, and county and state partners to develop solutions for endangered species conservation while providing for development interests.

In particular, Lora is best known for her contributions towards Carolina Heelsplitter conservation in South Carolina. Her interest in protecting and restoring this endangered freshwater mussel has led to the development of one of the first T&E Species Conservation Banks in the Southeast, and the first such conservation bank for the Carolina Heelsplitter. Lora has continued to promote various other mussel conservation activities including addressing threats from the prolonged and extensive drought, spearheading mussel data collection efforts, and helping develop the first ever mussel symposium for the Carolinas.

Lora has actively contributed towards other threatened and endangered species recovery issues throughout South Carolina including working with species such as the flatwoods salamander, Schweinitz's sunflower and relict trillium. She has also donated personal time working on some of South Carolina's State Heritage Preserves.

Lora's many accomplishments stem from a strong emphasis on partnerships and cooperation. Her work demonstrates the value and success of a proactive approach to conservation. To recognize her hard work and tireless dedication on behalf of threatened and endangered species throughout the state of South Carolina, Lora Zimmerman is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Teams

### **Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge Timber Cruise Team**

**Lamar C. Dorris, Jr., Forester  
Theodore Roosevelt Refuges Complex**

**Dusty Dendy, Fire Management Specialist  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Waymon C. Fondren, Supervisory Forestry Technician  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Joseph E. Harsh, Forestry Technician  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Leif A. Karnuth, Forester  
Chickasaw National Wildlife Refuge**

**Travis L. Prisock, Forestry Technician  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Rebecca L. Rosamond, Wildlife Biologist  
North Mississippi Refuge Complex**

**Henry R. Sansing, Wildlife Refuge Manager  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

**Richard E. Smith, Forester  
Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge**

For many years, the North Mississippi Refuges Complex has been without a forester and has needed to conduct a timber cruise for the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge. In the spring of 2008, staff from three Mississippi Refuges and one Tennessee Refuge participated in a team effort to complete the needed timber cruise on the 9,700 acre Refuge. Staff from Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge led the effort, with help from the Theodore Roosevelt Refuges Complex, West Tennessee Refuges Complex and the North Mississippi Refuges Complex.

Participants battled heat, bugs and high water for five days to complete their mission. Working in two or three-person teams, they cruised nearly 8,600 acres of mature forest, collecting data on over 900 points that transected the Refuge. Data collected included forest composition, regeneration, presence of cane and vines and other structural aspects of the forest.

Without the dedication and hard work of all those involved, it would not have been possible to gather such valuable information. Through their efforts and willingness to temporarily put their own workloads aside, the Refuge has received a professional wildlife timber cruise at a fraction of the cost to hire a private firm. Staff from the North Mississippi Refuges Complex can now base forest management decisions on this newly collected data and work to improve the forest to provide better habitat for neotropical migrants and other forest species.

Lamar C. Dorris Jr., Rebecca Rosamond, Henry Sansing, Richard E. Smith, Dusty Dendy, Waymon Fondren, Travis Prisock, Joseph Harsh, and Leif Karnuth are presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Team**

**Mark Cantrell, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Asheville, NC**

**Susan T. Cielinski, Chief,  
Branch of Resource Management  
National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA**

**Amanda K. Hill, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Charleston, SC**

**Patricia Woods, Attorney - Advisor  
Office of the Solicitor, Knoxville, TE**

These four individuals have come together over the course of the last four years to provide for significant anadromous fish resource gains throughout North and South Carolina. Their outstanding contributions and proactive approach towards multiple Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing projects have resulted in many accomplishments including:

- 1) fish passage and flow agreement on the Augusta Canal project,
- 2) a settlement agreement on the Santee project, doubling flows during fish spawning seasons and leading to significant benefits for Santee National Wildlife Refuge, and
- 3) addressing multiple Federal Energy Regulatory Commission project impacts via a multi Federal, State, and private partnership known as the Santee Accord, which, for the first time in the Southeast, has major utility parties agreeing to work towards a unified goal of restoring anadromous fish.

Mark, Sue, Amanda, and Patty have each contributed to the success of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process in their own special way. Their teamwork demonstrates that greater benefits to the resource can be achieved by working together rather than individually. This effort embodies the "One Service" mantra and teamwork concept that is found throughout the Southeast. In appreciation for their hard work and dedication in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission arena, Mark, Sue, Amanda and Patty are presented with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## **Louisiana Black Bear Critical Habitat Designation Team**

**Deborah Fuller, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA**

**Robert Greco, Information Technology Specialist  
Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA**

**David Soileau, Jr., Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Lafayette, LA**

This team, led by the Endangered Species Team Leader, Debbie Fuller worked long days, weekends, and some holidays for 18 months in order to meet court-ordered listing mandates. All listing thresholds were restricted to extreme and abnormally short deadlines to satisfy plaintiffs and the court regarding the “Harold Schoeffler; and Louisiana Crawfish Producers Association-West vs. Gale Norton.”

Deborah displayed steadfast dedication and professionalism, often at the expense of her personal time, performing in an adverse environment created and perpetuated by well-meaning but misinformed plaintiffs. David Soileau Jr., Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist, and Robert Greco, GIS/IT Coordinator, provided valuable support and high quality products essential to meeting the court’s orders. David thoroughly and painstakingly collected and assimilated the geographical, biological, and demographic data necessary to establish meaningful critical habitat criteria consistent with statutes and regulations, then effectively applied those criteria to the designation process; in addition to correspondence, report preparation, and coordination with Regional Office and refuge contacts, and stakeholders. Robert provided outstanding GIS support by collecting and integrating spatial data and evaluating variables to establish defensible boundaries.

The team overcame adversity with dignity and courage, developing and preparing several listing products for publication into the Federal Register per court-ordered mandates; coordinating with Solicitors, Regional and Washington office staff, expeditiously vetting high quality products through the chain-of-command, and managing pertinent field office communications while providing outstanding Service representation to our conservation partners and stakeholders. Deborah carefully and thoughtfully mediated reasonable solutions among several polarized agendas as the court’s order presented a significant potential to alienate 16 years of established private landowner partnerships and associated conservation easements. Our ability to meet the court’s highly restrictive mandates and maintain long established conservation partnerships in providing a scientifically sound listing action was firmly founded upon the accomplishment of this team which was extended beyond reasonable limits. This team, which modeled the principle that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts,” is therefore recognized and presented the Regional Directors Honor Award.

## **Biolage Partnership at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge Team**

**Susan Cassell, President  
“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, Sanibel, FL**

**Jack Karkis, Distribution Sales Consultant  
Saloncentric, Fort Myers, FL**

**Debora Koyama, Senior Marketing Director  
Biolage/Matrix/L’Oreal USA, New York, NY**

**William G. Thomas, Jr., Biologist  
J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge**

**Toni Westland, Park Ranger  
J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge**

Debora Koyama, Jack Karkis, Susan Cassell, Toni Westland, and Bill Thomas, Jr., have created an exemplary partnership between Biolage and the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The Partnership promotes the importance of conservation awareness in the community and demonstrates everyday ways to get involved with service projects that help local wildlife.

As a pilot activity, four local hair salons competed to earn the title “Biolage Salon of the Year” by promoting recycling of salon hair care bottles to their customers. For every bottle returned by consumers, the refuge received \$1 per hair care product or \$3 per Biolage product. This “Bring Back the Bottle” campaign raised \$7,000 for the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society was presented with the funds at the close of the Biolage Select “GO GRE.E.E.N” conservation event.

The Biolage Select “GO GRE.E.E.N” conservation event drew over 85 hair care professionals to the Refuge to work in the hot Florida sun. The team removed truckloads of invasive exotic plants, and “trimmed” the Shell Mound Trail. Finally, everyone signed a GO GRE.E.E.N Pledge, a commitment to proactively embrace, encourage, and empower environmental responsibility on a personal, professional and community level. In addition to the check provided to the Wildlife Society, the in-kind labor provided through this service project was worth over \$8,000. The efforts of the Biolage Partnership, and all participants in this venture is one to be modeled in communities across the Regions and beyond.

This Partnership is to be congratulated for their leadership, planning, hard work, commitment, and innovative approach to conservation. It proves that successful partnerships can engage an entire community and be forged in imaginative, unconventional ways.

For the teamwork by this group of dedicated employees, and for actions which will have landmark consequences, each member of the Biolage Team is recognized with the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Teams

### **Natural Resources Conservation Services Consultation Team**

**Jay B. Herrington, Regulatory Chief, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services  
Jacksonville, FL**

**Bradford S. Rieck, Assistant Field Supervisor  
Ecological Services  
Lafayette, LA**

**Stanley K. Simpkins, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services  
Jacksonville, FL**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service in Florida funds 500 to 800 cost-share projects each year and acquires easements on thousands of acres of agricultural lands for conservation. These funds go to farmers and ranchers for a variety of projects designed to reduce water consumption, improve water quality, and to restore wetlands and other valuable wildlife habitats. In 2007 alone, the Natural Resources Conservation Service funneled \$65.2 million toward these projects in Florida.

In order to facilitate compliance with the Endangered Species Act and maximize the value of the projects to listed species, Jay Herrington, Brad Rieck, and Stan Simpkins worked with their Natural Resources Conservation Service partners to develop a consultation “matrix.” The matrix addresses the effects of an astounding 139 Natural Resources Conservation Service management practices on 114 federally listed species. It allows Natural Resources Conservation Service planners to consider in advance, the “on-the-ground” effects expected to result from the application of each of the specific management practices under various scenarios and it provides specific measures to benefit each species.

Natural Resources Conservation Service and Service biologists subsequently provided training to Natural Resources Conservation Service project planners, District Conservationists, engineers, and technical service providers on the use of the matrix and it is now being used for project planning throughout Florida. Because the matrix is being used state-wide by Natural Resources Conservation Service planners, the projects funded by Farm Bill Programs are not only achieving a higher level of Endangered Species Act (ESA) compliance, but are also providing recovery benefits for the 114 federally listed species found throughout the state of Florida.

The development of the matrix and its use in Florida has influenced the national discussion on Farm Bill Program compliance with the ESA, and is an outstanding example where streamlining regulatory processes can not only save time and money but provide increased conservation benefits.

For the teamwork by this group of dedicated employees and for actions which will have landmark consequences, each member of the Natural Resources Conservation Services Consultation Team is recognized for their contributions with the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

### **North Mississippi Hurricane Team**

**Christopher Allen, Engineering Equipment Operator  
North Mississippi Refuges Complex**

**Hal Jones, Facility Operations Specialist  
North Mississippi Refuges Complex**

**Carlton Leachman, Engineering Equipment Operator  
North Mississippi Refuges Complex**

**Jimmy E. Perry, Engineering Equipment Operator  
North Mississippi Refuges Complex**

**Kevin C. Riales, Engineering Equipment Operator  
North Mississippi Refuges Complex**

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ike that struck the Gulf Coast in September of 2008, a crew of equipment operators, consisting of Hal Jones, Carlton Leachman, Jimmy Perry, Kevin Riales, and Chris Allen, departed from the North Mississippi Refuges Complex headed to Southwest Louisiana Refuges. The Complex was well prepared to respond to the call for help from the Service. During the Hurricane Arthur exercises, the Complex readied itself for deployment for times such as Hurricane Ike.

Within 48 hours, the crew from the Complex was equipped and ready to move independently and self sufficiently for two weeks. The crew took with them an array of equipment to assist with clean up and debris removal and to get the refuge back up and running as soon as possible.

They brought a diversity of talent and skills to the project, which proved to be invaluable in performing a number of much needed tasks. Some aspects of the work consisted of pumping water from around the visitor center area that could exacerbate an already deteriorating situation unless removed in a timely manner. The crew also moved a tremendous amount of furniture, equipment, and other personal property away from areas saturated with water to prevent any further damage. They performed some of the more unsavory and dirty jobs such as cleaning mud and debris from the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge office and compound, including the parking area, as well as repairs made to the damaged security fence and gates surrounding the compound to secure the property. In addition to helping with clean-up of facilities, the crew worked on debris removal from the nature trails, including the restrooms.

Overall, the crew provided a critical function to the Service in helping get Southwest Louisiana Refuges Complex back on its feet in a very short time. For this team effort, they are presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

## **Office of Surface Mining Liaison Team**

**Lee Andrews, Jr.  
Field Supervisor**

**Ecological Services, Frankfort, KY**

**David R. Horning, General Biologist  
Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA**

During the past year Dave Horning and Lee Andrews led efforts to improve the Service's working relationship with the Office of Surface Mining (OSM). This was a significant effort involving numerous meetings with OSM and all the field offices dealing with mining activities in Regions 3, 4, and 5. They were first tasked with coming up with consistent ways of doing business within and between the regions, and then meeting with OSM and the State Regulatory Authorities in the coal producing States. This proved to be a significant task, particularly in dealing with several aquatic species and the Indiana bat. Working with all the parties, they were able to find common grounds and begin to implement consistent ways of doing business in all three Regions that were acceptable to all parties.

For their persistence, innovation, and hard work on this critical Service effort, Dave Horning and Lee Andrews are presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## **Regional Office Emergency Recovery Team Atlanta, GA**

**Dale L. Bailey, Architect**

**Kevin R. Brooks, Contract Specialist**

**Billy Edwards, Civil Engineer**

**Brian K. Ellington, Co-Chief, Emergency Recovery Team**

**Dorothy Gibson, Administrative Assistant**

**Tyler R. Henderson, Construction Representative**

**Emery Hoyle, Co-Chief, Emergency Recovery Team**

**Richard Huffines, Co-Chief, Emergency Recovery Team**

**Brenda Kotch, Contract Specialist**

**Lester Lewis, Contract Specialist**

**John Morrow, Safety Specialist**

**Jo Muratti, Co-Chief, Emergency Recovery Team**

**James R. Parker, Construction Representative**

**Steve E. Sponaugle, Contract Specialist**

**Mark Tapp, Contract Specialist**

The Emergency Recovery Team (ERT) was developed as an innovative means of providing a dedicated cross-program team to rapidly and effectively address the pre-award and post-award management of the \$175 million in Storm Damage Appropriation Funds given to the Region for the impacts of the 2004, 2005, and 2008 hurricane seasons. The team includes employees from the National Wildlife Refuge System, Contracting, Engineering, Safety, and Budget & Finance.

Upon inception the ERT quickly formed an execution game plan for addressing the documented storm damaged needs and then worked the plan to surpass the required goal of obligating 90% of the \$132 million by June 30, 2007. Team members were required to go consistently above and beyond normal expectations to visit the Refuges and Hatcheries, develop statements of work, perform Validation Board briefings to the Executive Oversight Team, meet with contractors, and then negotiate, award, and administer contracts. Similar exceptional efforts were required to validate and process grants, purchases for force account work, and support other types of projects. The hard work continued, and by mid-2008, nearly all Service facilities and infrastructure were restored for operational use. The ERT completed over 15 times the normal, annual construction and repair workload of the Region in less than two years.

In addition to their unprecedented on-the-ground accomplishments for our Refuges and Hatcheries, the Team was able to represent the Region well by favorably responding to a lengthy OIG Audit of DOI's Hurricane Rebuilding Efforts as a unified front, resulting in only minor findings. The Region's effective framework for dealing with Hurricane Recovery efforts has led the way in the Service as a successful leadership model for emulation by other Regions and the National Park Service. Additionally, the ERT introduced a new organizational paradigm to the RO and has contributed to innovative improvements in the way the Region handles deferred maintenance and construction projects. The model of teamwork, synergy, and overall spirit of cooperation and camaraderie that the ERT possesses has inspired improvements in other B&A Divisions.

For the combined efforts of this talented group of Regional Office employees, they are each presented with the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Honor Awards for Teams

### **Roebuck Springs Watercress Darter Team**

**Daniel J. Drennen, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Jackson, MS**

**Thomas D. Grace, Jr., Criminal Investigator  
Office of Law Enforcement, Daphne, AL**

**Eric W. Spadgenske, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Daphne, AL**

**Robert W. Tawes, Deputy Field Supervisor,  
Ecological Services, Daphne, AL**

**Gerald A. Thornton, Attorney  
Department of the Interior  
Office of the Solicitor, Knoxville, TN**

Last September, five Department of the Interior employees took on an unprecedented task when thousands of endangered watercress darters were killed by a careless action. The fish kill happened at Roebucks Springs in Birmingham, Alabama, when a city employee used a trackhoe excavator to remove a beaver dam and underlying rock structure at the lower end of the spring pool. This caused the dewatering of the spring pool and a dramatic reduction in available darter habitat, thus killing thousands of darters.

Members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service immediately assessed the situation, estimated the extent of the damage, and worked with the city to enact short term emergency measures in order to protect the remaining darters. Eric Spadgenske and Rob Tawes from the Alabama Ecological Services Field Office, along with the species' lead biologist, Daniel Drennen, from the Jackson Ecological Services Field Office, and Jerry Thornton, from the Office of the Solicitor, took swift action while law enforcement officer Donnie Grace initiated an investigation. The team coordinated with the city, several state and federal agencies, the media, and concerned citizens. As a result, a permanent water-control structure has been placed in Roebuck Springs to stabilize the habitat of the watercress darter.

The team is continuing to negotiate with the city and others to secure additional conservation measures for this unique species. For their hard work and dedication, they are receiving the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Texas Petroleum Investigative Team**

**Jack R. Bohannon  
Wildlife Refuge Manager, Lacombe, LA**

**Scotty J. Boudreaux  
Refuge Law Enforcement Officer, Lacombe, LA**

**John B. Branum  
Refuge Law Enforcement Officer, Slidell, LA**

**Michael Centola  
U.S. Environment Protection Agency, Baton Rouge, LA**

**Sidney B. Charbonnet  
Criminal Investigator, Lafayette, LA**

Jack Bohannon, Scotty Boudreaux, John Branum and Sidney Charbonnet of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Mike Centola of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have demonstrated dedicated persistence, to bring about a guilty plea by an oil company operating on two national wildlife refuges in Louisiana.

Efforts to remedy the Texas Petroleum Investment Company's operations began in 2001, when Scotty Boudreaux began to document brine (salt) and petroleum spills occurring on the Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuge. To begin building a case, he began a process of cataloging spills and violations, conducting interviews, and engaging outside agencies. In 2005, the Texas Petroleum Company expanded to include the Romere Pass facility located on Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Sidney Charbonnet and Jack Bohannon worked to ensure that the company reported spills and conducted cleanup in a lawful and timely manner. In addition, they documented illegal brine releases into the refuge waters and unreported petroleum spills.

Due to an increasing number of incidents on Delta National Wildlife Refuge and years of documentation, Mike Centola accepted the case for investigation. He interviewed numerous current and former employees to further build the case into a felony Clean Water Act violation. Through his efforts with the U.S. Attorney's office, violations occurring on the two oil fields, under two separate Federal Court Districts, were combined into one case for prosecution in the Eastern District of Louisiana. The company was sentenced in Federal Court to a violation of the Clean Water Act and was ordered to pay a total of \$525,000 in fines and was placed on two years probation. The Service received \$425,000 for the management and oversight of the oil and gas program at the Delta and Atchafalaya National Wildlife Refuges, as well as protection and restoration of wildlife, fisheries, and habitat.

Jack Bohannon, Scotty Boudreaux, John Branum and Sidney Charbonnet of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Mike Centola, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are to be congratulated for their perseverance and dedication to duty, and collaborative efforts to protect and manage Service lands. To recognize their hard work, this team is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

### **Wildlife-Friendly Reservoir Design Team**

**Darla J. Fousek, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL**

**Doris Marlin, Project Manager  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville, FL**

**Steve Schubert, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL**

**Liberta Scotto, Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
Ecological Services, Vero Beach, FL**

Darla Fousek, Doris Marlin, Steve Schubert, and Liberta Scotto have devoted significant time and energy to develop wildlife-friendly reservoir designs. Their expertise, innovation, and ability to forge an effective interagency partnership highlight their leadership and commitment to wildlife protection and Everglades restoration.

This is a classic case of a challenging situation that provided a chance to learn and grow – said another way, “opportunity in the face of adversity.” Last year, after a reservoir was drawn down for inspection purposes, potential wildlife entrapment and nesting risks became clear. The vertical wall design of the reservoir created a situation where wildlife could not find a safe passageway to exit into adjacent habitats, and the quick draw down created conditions where nests could become at risk. Upon hearing about the situation, the Corps promptly notified Service biologists who immediately responded, working together to find ways to address the problem and minimize risks during maintenance and operations. Importantly, the learning experience has also fostered a forum for improving future designs. Darla, Doris, Steve, and Liberta have created an interagency team to develop revised reservoir designs that allow for improved wildlife movement and risk reduction.

By working together, understanding the nature of the problem, and finding common solutions, this partnership is now better positioned to advance a broader array of conservation objectives as we seek to identify and implement the storage and treatment needs within south Florida that are required to restore our Everglades and recover imperiled species. To recognize their hard work this team is presented the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

### **Yazoo Pumps Backwater Team**

**Thomas L. Edwards, Field Supervisor  
Migratory Birds Program Office, Hazen, AR**

**Joseph A. Fontaine, Deputy Refuge Manager  
Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Complex**

**Doug Fruge, Gulf Coast Fisheries Coordinator**

**Charles A. Sloan, Refuge Manager  
Panther Swamp National Wildlife Refuge**

The Yazoo Pumps Backwater Reformulation project is located in the Lower Mississippi River flood plain, in South Central Mississippi. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers planned to install a pumping plant that would force drain over 200,000 acres of wetlands. This project was originally conceived by the U.S. Corps of Engineers in 1941, and on August 31, 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency invoked a seldom used authority and vetoed the Pumps project due to unacceptable impacts to fish and wildlife.

The Environmental Protection Agency could not have vetoed the Pumps project without the data, excellent science, and on-the-ground knowledge provided by these four individuals. Through the tireless efforts, sometimes working nights and weekends, and through their drop-everything-and-provide-a-response-now positive attitude, The Environmental Protection Agency was able to formulate a scientifically sound Final Determination and Clean Water Act 404 (c) veto of the Yazoo Pumps project.

The efforts of these four individuals resulted in the continued protection of at least 67,000 acres of forested wetlands, 58 species of fish, 42 species of birds, 21 species of amphibians, and 32 species of reptiles. Additionally, four National Wildlife Refuges located within the project area (Yazoo, Theodore Roosevelt, Panther Swamp, and Holt Collier) will continue to be able to be managed to achieve the purposes for which they were established. For their outstanding work and unending efforts, this team is deserving of the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

## Distinguished Awards of Achievement

*Conservation Award in Honor of  
Tyler Alley Sykes*

**Gypsy Gooding Hanks  
Wildlife Biologist  
North Louisiana National Wildlife  
Refuge Complex**

Gypsy Gooding Hanks serves as the Wildlife Biologist for five refuges in every sense of the word, with many accomplishments on lands outside her duty station.

During 2008, Gypsy conducted ten surveys, from frog counts to bi-weekly waterfowl counts; wrote and received a grant for avian influenza surveillance; exceeded quotas in wood duck banding; worked to ensure the red-cockaded woodpecker program was managed to recovery guidelines; and monitored RCW nests and banded nestlings.

She collaborated on annual habitat plans; completed the annual pesticide use proposal for the Refuges; completed physical testing and served on prescribed fire burn team; served as GIS Specialist and worked with FEMA team for Hurricane Ike.

Gypsy created a biological review notebook and planned and hosted the Black Bayou Refuge review; developed a biological review template for use across the Region; reviewed, edited, and finalized Comprehensive Conservation Plans; developed maps for four CCPs; and wrote the hydrology restoration plan and environmental assessment for the Mollicy levee breaching project.

She prepared several Section 7 consultations; compiled the annual narrative for the Refuge complex; presented four public outreach programs; served on the ArkLa Wildlife Study Group at Louisiana Technical University.

She assisted with the youth waterfowl hunt; collected deer data during Refuge hunts; and went on successful deer, turkey, waterfowl, and squirrel hunts with her husband John, a biologist with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

With no further need for explanation or justification, Gypsy Gooding Hanks is presented the Regional Director's 2008 Biologist of the Year Award.

*Outreacher of the Year Award*

**Bonnie Strawser  
Supervisory Park Ranger  
Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge**

When it comes to outreach, Bonnie Strawser is a dynamo. In 2008, it went beyond the Wings Over Water Festival, the challenges facing Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge and her day-to-day communications work.

During the months that the Evans Road Fire on Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge smoldered and burned, Bonnie took the public information officer's routine daily reports and went the extra mile by writing a series of human interest stories that kept the local papers wanting more and willing to print the facts with the interesting stories. She did not need to be asked, and the media coverage was exceptional.

Bonnie's media relations work on the Evans Road fire was made all the more effective because of her pro-active relationship marketing with local and state-wide reporters about the benefits of prescribed burning. As her project leader, Mike Bryant, has said, "Whether it's just before we begin the burning season, or a complex biological issue we are facing, she is on it instantly. More often than not she is reminding us it needs to be done, and, "oh - by the way, here's the news release for your review!"

And that's not all. She also found time to support one of this Region's highest conservation priorities - landscape conservation through the strategic habitat conservation framework. As our agency began to bolster its conservation work through this framework, Bonnie immersed herself in it until she could start and lead a communications group within the SEVA-ENC SHC Team. Her team developed outreach strategies that would be relevant to staff, it set up a local SHC website and linked it to field offices and other Service sites, and she worked with the Region's External Affairs Office to develop an SHC presentation to promote this priority at the Refuge System's Visitors Services workshop in the fall. Because of her effort in this regard, field stations in North Carolina have established themselves as leaders in the implementation of this framework.

Bonnie is the face of Service in so many ways in Eastern North Carolina. North Carolinians know the good and necessary work the Service does largely as a result of Bonnie Strawser's ceaseless and creative outreach efforts. Because of her accomplishments in 2008, Bonnie Strawser is presented the Regional Director's 2008 Outreacher of the Year Award.

*PEERS AWARD*

*People Exhibiting Excellence  
in Regional Support*

**Donald H. Calder  
Chief  
Contracting and Grants Services  
Atlanta, GA**

Don Calder is an excellent team player with impeccable credibility. He receives compliments, accolades and thank you's throughout the year for his tireless work to award contracts and grants, resolve problems, and develop innovative solutions to challenges. For all of our questions and requests for guidance, Don always delivers a positive, "can do" attitude as opposed to giving us one or more reasons why we cannot do something. When there have been problems or issues he has provided helpful direction and guidance to help us resolve the issue or problem, while still meeting the procurement requirements he must abide by.

Don clearly understands what it means to be a team player - working on the same team as the biologists, and other field-based employees who are working toward mission goals. For example, during FY 2008, he traveled to our National PFW meeting in Oklahoma City, OK to interact with the PFW field staff. At this meeting, he patiently listened to our many questions and responded to each with valid and helpful guidance. Later during this fiscal year (August, 2008), he worked closely with the Regional PFW Coordinator in developing and carrying out a one day workshop for Service Project Officers across all operational program areas. Don has taken the initiative to implement monthly summaries of procurement requests, and in the last quarter of the year, he provides bi-weekly summaries of the obligation status of our agreements and contracts. The implementation of this process has allowed our field staff to check their submissions, and has resulted in a number of errors being caught and corrected prior to funding obligations, and has improved both the effectiveness and efficiency of our collective efforts.

For Don's innovation, professionalism, commitment, and for caring so much about the customers he serves, Don is awarded the PEERS Award for People Exhibiting Excellence in Regional Service.

*Strategic Habitat Conservation Leadership Award*

**Steven Alexander, Ecologist, Ecological Services, Cookeville, TN**

**Cynthia G. Bohn, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA**

**Laura Brandt, Wildlife Biologist, Migratory Birds, Fort Lauderdale, FL**

**Stephen C. Brock, Deputy Area Supervisor, National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA**

**Michael R. Bryant, Project Leader, North Carolina Coastal Plan Refuges Complex**

**Gail Carmody, Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Panama City, FL**

**Andrew Currie, Hatchery Manager, Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery**

**Dean W. Demarest, Deputy Chief, Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA**

**Terry Doyle, Wildlife Biologist, Migratory Birds, Arlington, VA**

**Larry Handley, USGS, Advisory Team, Lafayette, LA**

**James Harris, Wildlife Biologist, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex**

**Chuck Hunter, Chief, Division of Planning & Resource Management, National Wildlife Refuge System, Atlanta, GA**

**Amy Keister, Natural Resource Planner, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture, Vicksburg, MS**

**Nicole E. Lamp, Fish/Wildlife Biologist Student Trainee, Ecological Services, Atlanta, GA**

**R. Wilson Laney, South Atlantic Fisheries Coordinator, Raleigh, NC**

**Diana Swan, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Federal Aid, Atlanta, GA**

**Sandra S. Tucker, Field Supervisor, Ecological Services, Athens, GA**

**William B. Uihlein, Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Coordinator, Vicksburg, MS**

**David Viker, Regional Chief, Migratory Birds, Atlanta, GA**

**Kristi Watkins, Congressional and Legislative Affairs Specialist, External Affairs, Atlanta, GA**

Following the joint U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Geological Survey “National Ecological Assessment Team” (NEAT) report, the Service Directorate embraced “Strategic Habitat Conservation” (SHC) – a science-driven framework for defining and implementing biologically explicit landscape conservation priorities. SHC enables us to think more comprehensively and strategically about our day-to-day conservation work through functional elements of biological planning, conservation design, delivery, and monitoring and research.

We have an increasingly urgent need to embrace a strategic approach to landscape conservation due to a rapidly changing world and growing threats to conservation that were unimaginable just a few short years ago. The Southeast Region responded to the progressive challenges of SHC in part by establishing a Regional SHC Advisory Team comprised of members who were deliberately hand-selected for their demonstrated ability to think critically, respond dependably, and lead purposefully. The Team led the way nationally by taking a thoughtful approach to long-term sustainability of SHC. In addition to their advisory work with the Regional Directorate and other Regional leaders, team members have travelled throughout the Region and nation, delivering a series of well-received, audience-tailored presentations at regional and national Service program gatherings, ecosystem team meetings, and various “communities of practice” workshops.

The Regional Directorate is extremely grateful for the Regional SHC Advisory Team’s time, energy, and creativity to help not only the Southeast Region but the entire Service put its best foot forward towards achieving sustainable landscapes for priority trust resources in an increasingly changing world. For their hard work and dedication, they are receiving the Regional Director’s Honor Award.

## Distinguished Awards of Achievement

*Wage System Employee of the Year*

**Carl Campbell**  
**Maintenance Mechanic**  
**Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery**

Carl Campbell serves as the sole maintenance worker at the Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery and as such is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of a fleet of truck/distribution units, specialty equipment, tractors, attachments and heavy equipment. Carl is also responsible for maintaining a physical plant of 15 ponds and water control structures, numerous water delivery systems, electrical distribution lines, numerous support buildings, an intensive culture building and a National Historic Residence. His extensive knowledge and ingenious nature has allowed the facility to complete numerous deferred maintenance projects with little to no additional base funding.

In addition to these duties, Carl also plays an important role in the culture of the numerous imperiled species produced at the hatchery. One of his most important contributions is the role he played in the 2008 Lake Sturgeon production season. Alligator Gar Brood stock collection coincided with the lake sturgeon spawning efforts being conducted in Wisconsin. Alligator Gar production is a high priority program for this station and as such required the project leader and the lead fish culturist for the station to be in the field collecting brood stock during the lake sturgeon spawning. Carl accepted the responsibility of overseeing the lake sturgeon program during this absence. Carl successfully coordinated the transfer of eggs from Wisconsin and cared for the eggs throughout hatch. His careful attention to detail and dedication to the project led to an 80% hatch rate on the eggs received. This was the first attempt to hatch Lake Sturgeon eggs at this hatchery.

Carl also continues to be the primary outreach person for most of this facility's restoration stocking efforts. Carl has been praised by various State Game and Fish agencies for giving concise and factual information pertaining to these projects. His involvement in public outreach efforts has proven to be instrumental in relaying the message of the importance of imperiled species restoration. This willingness to work long hours, under adverse conditions, is invaluable to the development of partnerships and is also essential in reaching resource objectives.

Carl Campbell is truly one of a kind and his exemplary work ethic, his dedication to the Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery, and to the Service is surpassed by no one and he is truly worthy of the honor of Wage System Employee of the Year.

*Wage System Employee of the Year*

**Bruce D. Mitchell**  
**Engineering Equipment Operator**  
**Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex**

Bruce Mitchell is the type maintenance worker and employee every refuge manager dreams of having. After working 20+ years in private industry operating every kind of heavy equipment on a daily basis, he came to the Service a few years ago as an expert. Bruce has become a Regional Equipment Operator Safety Instructor and he assists other station's equipment operators on mission oriented projects. His extensive knowledge and skill in equipment maintenance and operation impresses other operators in the Service.

He is a team player, and this year, working with volunteers and staff, he completed deferred maintenance projects including constructing a pier and dock, installing gates, and parking areas, and performing minor and major repairs not only on equipment assigned to him, but to other equipment on the station. Many of the projects Bruce has completed were left over duties from vacant positions in the complex in addition to his own responsibilities. In the absence of the fire equipment operator for the refuge complex, Bruce constructed prescribed fire lanes, rehabilitated old wildland firelines, and repaired fire equipment. Although Bruce is not fire funded he took part in all of the station's prescribed fires as the equipment operator on fire plows, marsh masters, and soft tracks.

Bruce found innovative solutions to refuge problems and completed projects that would otherwise have to be contracted out. He replaced a large complex sewer line system at our headquarters campus, installed pilings for a pier, installed culverts and found a source that donated culverts and brick to the refuge. As the primary equipment operator for the Southeast Louisiana refuges, Bruce was required to work at seven of the eight refuges in the Complex. Because of the distance between these refuges his work often required him to spend nights away from home. His work and willingness saved the government thousands of dollars. With the landfall of Hurricane Gustav and Ike, Bruce prepared equipment from flooding and damage and repaired roads, trails, and parking areas to be open to the public almost immediately after the hurricanes passed.

While working with other staff and volunteers, Bruce exerts a major positive influence on everyone around him, and has shown dedication to the Service. Bruce, and his wife Jenny, have become goodwill ambassadors to the station's five RV Camper Volunteer couples. These volunteers complete valuable work for the refuge and Bruce makes them feel appreciated not only at work, but has them over to his house for dinners and special celebrations, including Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Bruce reports to work each morning thankful for his job and appreciative of the excellent equipment he has to work with. His attitude is reflected in his quality work. For these reasons, Bruce D. Mitchell is presented the Regional Directors' Wage System Employee of the Year Award.

## Regional Director's Conservation Awards

### Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Montgomery, AL

**Stanley Cook, Chief, Fisheries Section**

**William Nichols, Assistant Chief,  
Fisheries Section**

**Paul Johnson, Director,  
Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center**

The stream drainages of Alabama and adjoining states comprise the most extraordinarily diverse aquatic ecosystem of North America. Human development and modification during the past century, has resulted in the extinction of 69 aquatic species, and the listing of an equal number as threatened or endangered under the ESA. A host of additional aquatic species are considered candidates for listing, or as species of concern.

Stan Cook, Nick Nichols, Paul Johnson and others in the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources have stepped up to address the challenge of protecting and managing aquatic biodiversity during a time of climate change and water wars. With visionary leadership in aquatic conservation, they have established the Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center at Marion, Alabama, devoted to research and husbandry of rare and poorly known aquatic species. Life history and habitat information developed at Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center is essential for aquatic habitat protection and restoration. The Center's hatchery progeny will be used to re-establish and expand the ranges of species most vulnerable to drought, spills, and other random events, including the effects of climate change.

Concurrent with designing and constructing the facilities, Alabama Aquatic Biodiversity Center's staff has led a multi-year effort to develop comprehensive propagation plans for more than 130 imperiled aquatic mollusks of the Mobile Basin and Cumberlandian Region.

In recognition of their outstanding commitment, efforts, and leadership to address the trend of endangerment and extinction of the Southeastern aquatic fauna, these individuals, representing the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are awarded the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

### Alabama Department of Transportation Montgomery, AL

**D.J. McInnes, Director, Montgomery, AL**

**Vincent E. Calametti, P.E., Division  
Engineer, 9th Division, Mobile, AL**

**John Shill, Assistant Environmental  
Coordinator, Montgomery, AL**

The Alabama Department of Transportation has been an invaluable partner in the conservation of threatened and endangered species in Alabama. Among their many accomplishments, two projects deserve regional recognition: the establishment of an 800-acre conservation bank for the threatened Gopher Tortoise and a protective barrier along the Mobile Bay Causeway (U.S. Highway 90) to exclude endangered Alabama red-bellied turtles from the roadway.

The Gopher Tortoise Conservation Bank began in 2004, in an effort to minimize impacts to the species as a result of new highway projects. To date, there have been over 100 tortoises moved to this facility, and the population is healthy and reproducing.

The Protective Barrier was funded and installed by Alabama Department of Transportation after a study indicated the Alabama Red-Bellied Turtle was the most frequently-killed vertebrate on the Causeway. Construction of the permanent fence started in the spring of 2008 and was completed before the beginning of the fall 2008 nesting season. Since the fence was installed overall mortality is down 75 percent. Alabama Red-Bellied Turtles now have a brighter future.

In 2008, the Alabama Department of Transportation continued to be a key player in the recovery of Federal Trust Fish and Wildlife resources in Alabama. For these efforts, we believe D.J. McInnes, Vincent Calametti and John Shill, on behalf of the Alabama Department of Transportation, are deserving of special recognition and are awarded the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

### American Airlines

**Peter Dolara, Senior Vice President**

**Aimet Ardin**

**Jose Rucabado**

**Carlos Santana**

**Julio Sotero**

**Minett Velez**

In 2008, American Airlines became a partner in conservation helping the Service recover endangered species. Peter Dolara, Senior Vice President, learned about the plight of the Puerto Rican Parrot at the American Airlines 2008 Earth Day celebration. He made a commitment to build and donate 13 artificial nests for the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program. The monetary value of this donation is estimated around \$15,000 but the true value is immeasurable.

In the process, American Airline staff improved the design of the parrot nests. The improved design better withstands rough weather conditions. The new nests give biologists increased mobility to deploy through the rugged rainforest wilderness as they now carry two separate halves of what used to be a monolithic six feet tall structure. American Airlines also provided cameras powered with solar panels so biologists can continue to monitor reproduction with minimal disturbances to chicks and adults.

American Airlines' cooperation with the Service is not limited to helping the Puerto Rican Parrot. It assisted the Service by transporting at no cost a hawksbill sea turtle from the U.S. Virgin Islands to a rehabilitation facility in Florida, after the turtle was viciously attacked by feral dogs while laying eggs.

These acts of support to recover and protect species came during one of the toughest times for the airline industry.

For their altruistic donation of resources and specialized know-how, for their hands-on approach, and the collaborative spirit of their staff, American Airlines is presented the Regional Director's Honor Award.

## Regional Director's Conservation Awards

### **Ducks Unlimited South Atlantic Field Office**

**Craig LeSchack, North Charleston, SC**

**Billy Webster, North Charleston, SC**

The Ducks Unlimited South Atlantic Field Office has contributed a significant amount of funds and in-kind services to Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge. These efforts have led to the enhancement of eight managed wetlands (impoundments) totaling 1,429 acres and directly lead to a two to three fold increase in waterfowl use on the affected refuge wetlands.

The first projects were completed in 2006 when three pump stations and five water control structures were replaced and five miles of levee were rehabilitated. Ducks Unlimited conducted the engineering, contracting, and oversight for the projects with an in-kind service value of \$70,000. They also obtained a \$173,000 grant which was added to Fish and Wildlife Service funds to enable completion of the project without having to scale back the project or request additional Service funds.

In 2007, Ducks Unlimited obtained a \$102,250 grant and contributed \$21,395 of in-kind engineering, contracting, and oversight services. This contribution was added to a \$163,899 NAWCA Grant to secure funding for the installation of a new pumping station on the 272 acre MI-9 impoundment. This pumping station allowed management of a wetland which previously had very limited water management capability.

Currently, Ducks Unlimited is actively soliciting \$300,000 in funds to enable the replacement of the MI-11 pumping station, which is currently defunct and is necessary to manage water for the 429 acre impoundment. This one impoundment has harbored as many as 30,000 wintering waterfowl when food and water conditions are optimal.

Through these generous actions, the Ducks Unlimited staff at the South Atlantic Field Office have demonstrated a clear commitment to improving waterfowl habitat on Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge and are well deserving of the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

### **U.S. Army Garrison Natural Resources Branch Fort Gordon, Georgia**

**Kenneth Boyd**

**Allen Braswell**

**Steve Camp**

**Robert Drumm**

The Natural Resources Branch Biologists, Robert Drumm, Steve Camp, Alan Braswell, and Ken Boyd have implemented an intensive Red-Cockaded Woodpecker/Longleaf Pine Ecosystem restoration on Fort Gordon that has resulted in an increase of their red-cockaded woodpecker population from zero birds in 1990 to 17 active clusters and approximately 40 birds by 2009, and restoration of over 2,000 acres of longleaf pine habitat. They have achieved this result by working cooperatively as a team with the Army trainers and leadership to change the way the forest and the red-cockaded woodpeckers are managed on the installation. They use cavity inserts, translocation, augmentation, wire grass planting, prescribed burning, thinning, midstory removal, and planting of longleaf combined with a determination and commitment to make these techniques successful. Their success is shown in an annual red-cockaded woodpecker population increase of 5-10% per year.

By restoring the habitat for the red-cockaded woodpeckers, they have also helped other rare species that depend on the longleaf ecosystem, such as Bachman's sparrow, Southeastern kestrel, Southern hognose snake, Florida pine snake, gopher tortoise, and several plants. For these and other conservation efforts, Fort Gordon was recently recognized as a Regional Finalist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Military Conservation Partnership Award.

Mr. Camp, Mr. Drumm, Mr. Braswell, and Mr. Boyd are recognized for their leadership and positive influence within and outside the Army toward recovery of an endangered species and ecosystem and are well deserving of the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

**Tanya Code, EPA, Washington Office**

**Palmer Hough, EPA, Washington Office**

**Tom Welborn, EPA, Atlanta Office**

**Jim Giattina, EPA, Atlanta Office**

**Bill Ainslie, EPA, Atlanta Office**

For the last 20 years, the Environmental Protection Agency has developed and used sound science to show the detrimental effects that the Yazoo Pumps project would have on the lower Mississippi Delta eco-region. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) showed extreme courage and fortitude as it developed its Recommended Determination and ultimately issued its Final Determination on August 31, 2008, vetoing the Yazoo Pumps project. EPA vetoed the Yazoo Pumps project despite very strong Washington, D.C. and State of Mississippi political pressure and influence that favored the construction and operation of the Pumps project.

Through EPA's diligence, perseverance, and determination, the Final Determination resulted in the continued protection of at least 67,000 acres of ecologically significant and important forested wetlands and associated fisheries and wildlife resources; the protection of 58 species of fish, 42 species of birds, 21 species of amphibians, and 32 species of reptiles. Additionally, four national wildlife refuges located within the project area (Yazoo, Theodore Roosevelt, Panther Swamp, and Holt Collier) will continue to be able to be managed to achieve the purposes for which they were established.

For their outstanding work and unending efforts, the Environmental Protection Agency is deserving of the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Paul R. LaPointe**  
**Tennessee Valley Authority,**  
**Office of Environmental**  
**Resources and Services**  
**Muscle Shoals, AL**

It's been over three years since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged the Gulf Coast leaving a swath of destruction that has been unparalleled in our lifetimes. Fortunately for the Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority's Environmental Resources and Services group stepped up and offered its expertise and services to repair refuge infrastructure - the canal systems, roads, levees, pumping stations and water control structures that are critical to our wildlife and public use missions. As a result, refuges in affected areas have almost the entire critical management infrastructure and associated functions restored and in most cases, improved due to construction and design efforts of TVA.

In addition to providing detailed scoping of damages and acquiring the necessary permits from Federal, State and local agencies, they have repaired almost 75 miles of levees and canals; made repairs to over 20 roads; repaired or replaced 7 bridges; repaired 12 parking areas; repaired or replaced 12 public use facilities such as boardwalks, observation towers, and trails; repaired or replaced almost 75 water control structures and pumping stations critical to migratory bird and other wildlife habitat; and provided assistance to the EPA hazmat cleanup effort for both the Katrina/Rita and Ike events. They have also completed numerous other tasks such as hydrology studies, geotechnical evaluations, and numerous designs for other facilities.

Throughout the process, TVA managed our hurricane repair projects with a constant eye toward obtaining the best value for the Service and the taxpayer while restoring critical refuge functions as quickly as possible. Due to its efficiency, several million dollars have been returned to the Service for use in addressing numerous other hurricane repair projects in other storm affected areas.

For their diligent work to help ensure that critical repair needs on refuges were met in record time and in a cost effective manner, it is an honor to recognize the Tennessee Valley Authority with the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Anngeolace Blue-McLean**  
**Friends of the Chassahowitzka National**  
**Wildlife Refuge Complex**  
**Crystal River, FL**

Over the years, the Friends of the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Friends) have provided the five refuges within the Complex with invaluable support. In 2008, the Friends stepped up efforts and contributions with leadership and participation on three very important projects.

First, the Friends Group established the "Friends of the Tampa Bay National Wildlife Refuges," providing a dedicated Friends Group to improve its recruitment of volunteers at this distant refuge.

Second, the Friends Group began, and continues to work on development of interpretative and public use facilities at the Cary Unit of the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge. The Friends secured a grant from the Lastinger Foundation for \$152,000 to provide access to the property, which will include the first land base access for the public in the entire Complex. Upon completion, the Refuge will provide the public with interpretative trails and displays, a wildlife observation tower and a kayak/canoe launching ramp.

Third, the Friends Group has taken the lead in the effort to acquire the 57-acre, Three Sisters Springs Property. The property, which would be added to the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge, would ensure the property remains undeveloped, and would protect natural springs that provide critical habitat for wintering manatees in Crystal River. Their efforts have resulted in the City of Crystal River receiving \$6.3 million from the Florida Communities Trust in support of the project and their fund raising effort bringing nearly \$2.5 million towards the required match for the Florida Communities Trust grant. The SWFWMD has pledged \$2 million towards the projects and the last required funds will be provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Friends of the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex are to be congratulated for their dedication and tremendous conservation efforts.

For the initiative she has exercised and the results she has achieved, Anngeolace Blue-McLean is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Captain John Burton**  
**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation**  
**Commission**  
**Division of Law Enforcement**  
**Crystal River, FL**

The North Central Region of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Law Enforcement provided invaluable support to the Service during the 2007-2008 manatee season.

The Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge had two vacant law enforcement positions through the 2007-2008 manatee season, creating gaps in its ability to provide needed patrols. In response to requests for help from the Service and residents in Crystal River, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission doubled its patrols to better protect manatees, providing two officers each in the Kings Bay and Homosassa River areas throughout the manatee season.

During busy weekends, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission detailed officers from other counties that normally would patrol State waters off-shore. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's increased efforts ensured that manatees received adequate protection in their wintering areas, and in the process, shielded the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex from a potential increase in complaints from the general public.

The North Central Region of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Division of Law Enforcement is presented a Regional Directors Conservation Award in recognition of their dedication to conservation, and in appreciation for their tireless support of the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

## Regional Director's Conservation Awards

**Joseph Cole**  
**Resident Agent-in-Charge**  
**Environmental Protection Agency,**  
**Knoxville, TN**

The Environmental Protection Agency-Criminal Investigations Division's office in Knoxville, Tennessee is led by Resident Agent in-Charge Joe Cole. Joe's vision and persistence to a symbiotic partnership with the Service has led to the creation of the Service's first law enforcement field station in Knoxville and the inclusion of the Service into the East Tennessee Environmental Crimes Task Force. The Task Force, led by the U.S. Attorney's Office, is responsible for detecting, investigating, and prosecuting major polluters of East Tennessee's waterways. Many of these rivers, lakes, and wetlands provide habitat for significant populations of threatened and endangered species as well as migratory birds.

Joe recognized the need for the Service's expertise with the Endangered Species Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act to augment the Task Force's effectiveness in investigating and prosecuting large scale environmental crimes. Joe and the Environment Protection Agency's Special Agent in-Charge offered office space and support at no cost to the Service at the Resident Agent-in-Charge's office in Knoxville, Tennessee. Together, Service and Environmental Protection Agency special agents have combined resources to investigate several violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

Joe's continued support of the Service's mission has resulted in a very successful partnership that is unique and of certain benefit to our Nation's natural resources. For his efforts and commitment to federal wildlife law enforcement, Joe Cole is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Kenneth Haddad**  
**Executive Director**  
**Florida Fish and Wildlife**  
**Conservation Commission**

As Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Ken Haddad sets the standard for communication, collaboration, and partnerships. His ability to proactively engage stakeholders and partners in all phases of planning and decision making processes results in unparalleled public support for Commission programs.

From Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative to species management plans, Ken has made transparency, public participation, and collaboration the hallmarks of his tenure. Examples of this include Ken's leadership and proactive support of the Manatee Forum, bald eagle management, the Interagency Florida Panther Response Team, manatee law enforcement efforts, and the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership.

Since his appointment, Ken has maintained an open door to Service managers, resulting in coordination on everything from permit reviews, to strategies for species management, to melding of State/Federal resource priorities. More importantly, it has led to the trust that makes this possible. And for the public, the result is a consistent, clear, and effective message for conservation, something we like to call, "no daylight between us."

For his estimable work and professional ethic, for his partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Kenneth Haddad is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Santee Cooper Public Service Authority**  
**Moncks Corner, SC**  
**John R. Inabinet (Representative)**

The Santee Cooper Public Service Authority has a long, solid history of partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Santee National Wildlife Refuge, dating to the Refuge's establishment in 1941. Foraged from necessity, reflecting history and evolving with our national and local community growth, this partnership is a model of natural resource conservation and management.

Santee Cooper has provided support through donations, multi-disciplinary professional expertise, resources, efforts to expand the Santee National Wildlife Refuge boundary, and efforts to grow concepts of landscape conservation and refuge management. Actions include moving forward on FERC conservation needs, mitigating urban development, and directly participating in refuge programs, to include the refuge wetland management and enhancement review team and the steering committee for the Santee Birding and Nature Festival.

Santee Cooper has tirelessly worked with the Refuge to identify potential buffer zones and reinstate approximately 65-acres of open water and wetlands at Polly-Cantey Bay on Lake Marion as part of the Refuge. Its legal, environmental, and survey staff continue to visit and inspect boundaries to help identify, incorporate, and conserve additional sites as part of the Refuge.

Santee Cooper provided ground support to treat acres of exotic and undesirable species in drainage channels. The authority also provided helicopter support to treat 125 acres of giant cutgrass and cattail on the Refuge's Blackbottom Pond, 100-Acre Island, and Bluff Unit impoundments (valued at about \$16,491).

Finally, Santee Cooper helped to restore the Timber Island Field impoundment complex by contracting a topographic survey to evaluate hydrological management and reconstruction of this system (October 2008; valued at about \$18,000).

From Santee Cooper Public Safety Authority, the commitment towards environmental stewardship has been unflinching. It is therefore a great honor and pleasure to present John R. Inabinet, representing Santee Cooper Public Safety Authority, the Regional Director's Conservation Partners Award.

**Avian Reconditioning Center  
Scott and Carol McCorkle  
Apopka, FL**

The Avian Reconditioning Center is a non-profit birds of prey rehabilitation and education facility specializing in connecting people with nature. Avian Reconditioning reaches more than 10,000 people annually by providing educational programs featuring live hawks, falcons, kites, owls and eagles, and through community volunteerism. Programs focus on natural history and the need for habitat conservation.

The Avian Reconditioning Center also encourages compassion for injured and recovering raptors through its active wildlife rehabilitation efforts specializing in difficult to manage eagles and other birds of prey. The center also prepares young orphaned and/or injured raptors to hunt using traditional falconry techniques. The center also has admitted and released hundreds of migratory birds since opening in 2002.

In 2008, the Avian Reconditioning Center continued to make significant contributions to conservation through this combined approach of wildlife rehabilitation and environmental education. The center assisted the Service in evaluating a bald eagle for possible release to the wild that had been previously considered non-releasable and was in captivity for over five years. This eagle required hundreds of hours of extensive training, including physical reconditioning, and teaching the eagle to hunt and capture prey. Over six months of Avian Reconditioning Center's diligent efforts with this eagle resulted in its successful release to the wild using a gradual release program to integrate the eagle into the wild population.

Avian Reconditioning Center partnership with the Service in conserving migratory birds continues to make a difference, one life at a time, connecting birds and people with the wild. For their important work and the long-reaching effects of their product, Scott and Carol McCorkle are presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Dr. Maurice F. Mettee  
Senior Scientist, Biological Systems  
Geological Survey of Alabama,  
Tuscaloosa, AL**

Dr. Maurice F. (Scott) Mettee has been a regional authority in the distribution and ecology of freshwater fishes for more than 35 years. Scott began his career in 1975 with the Geological Survey of Alabama as a biologist, and has dedicated his career to advancing our knowledge of Alabama's fishes and the streams and rivers they live in. He has been instrumental in supporting and conducting fish passage studies on the Alabama River. His knowledge of large riverine fishes and the cooperative relationships he was able to establish with the Corps of Engineers enabled the Service and others to conduct several fish passage studies on the Alabama River in recent years.

He has conducted research and published results on fish movements in the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers, primarily paddlefish and southeastern blue suckers. He has also worked recently with the threatened Gulf sturgeon and early in his career, he conducted research on the endangered Okaloosa darter in northwest Florida. One of the highlights of his long career was the publication of the *Fishes of Alabama and the Mobile River Basin*. This lifelong project is a testimony to the passion and dedication Scott has for Alabama's native fishes. His work with the distribution and ecology of freshwater fishes has helped create a solid scientific basis for decisions made by the Service in this region.

Scott has been a valued friend and colleague to the Service and his dedicated work ethic for understanding the fishes of Alabama is second to none. After 35 years of devoted service, Scott will retire in June, leaving behind a tremendous void in the field of large river fish ecology in the state. We will miss him greatly but congratulate him on a wonderful career and the scientific legacy he leaves behind.

The Service has a tremendous respect for the contributions of this talented scientist and his research. Dr. Maurice F. Mettee is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Luke Naylor  
Waterfowl Biologist  
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission,  
Little Rock, AR**

Among the State partners in the Southeast Region, Arkansas soars high with wood duck banding efforts. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has exceeded its quota since 2001, banding 8,500 birds during this period. This banding effort is critical to the continued conservation of this species.

Wood ducks are considered a highly valued bird, as the Southeast Region's most common breeding duck and the second most popular waterfowl species after the mallard. Its striking beauty often earns it the title of most beautiful North American waterfowl. The wood duck is also the waterfowl species most dependent upon increasingly imperiled forested wetland habitats, selecting closed canopy forests and dense shrub swamps as its preferred home. These relatively secretive habits make it virtually impossible to conduct wood duck population surveys by traditional methods, leaving harvest surveys as the primary means of assessing populations and harvest potential. This data is heavily dependent upon sufficient banding and reporting rates.

Well distributed banding requires tremendous effort shared by the Fish and Wildlife Service and its State partners – work that cannot be adequately accomplished by one agency alone. The State of Arkansas does far more than its share for the conservation of the wood duck and has for more than two decades.

For the excellence of these and his many other contributions to our Nation's natural resources, Luke Naylor, is recognized with the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

## Regional Director's Conservation Awards

**Matt Van Paepghem**  
President/Owner of WenMarr  
Management Company  
Fairburn, GA

Matt Van Paepghem, Owner/President of WenMarr Management Company, is being recognized for his continued support to Service programs by teaching children how to fish. Matt and the WenMarr Management Company have provided food, prizes, raffle items, as well as other invaluable services and goods to the Warm Springs Kids Fish for Fun days, Big Brother and Big Sister Atlanta Chapter fishing event, as well as heading and being a major contributor for the Camp Sunshine Bassmaster Tournament.

Matt's love of fishing and children has helped the Service to connect children with nature and provide fishing opportunities that they normally would not have had. This past year at Matt's request, Friends of Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery were given an opportunity to provide family activities at the Camp Sunshine Bassmaster Tournament. The event generated over \$75,000 to be used to provide services to children with cancer.

It is with this dedication and commitment to children that Matt Van Paepghem is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.

**Josh Raglin**  
Brosnan Forest Land Manager  
Norfolk Southern Corporation, Norfolk, VA

Across the Southeast, longleaf pine forests support many of our federally threatened and endangered species and many more species of concern. Once estimated to cover over 93 million acres, less than 3 million acres remain today. As many corporations with large timber holdings in South Carolina have begun to sell off tracts of land, one corporation has come to appreciate the uniqueness of the forests it owns.

Located in one of the fastest growing counties in South Carolina, Brosnan Forest was especially vulnerable to development pressures. Placing conservation values above profit margins, Norfolk Southern recently donated a conservation easement on Brosnan Forest, constituting the largest easement ever donated by a corporation in South Carolina history. This perpetually protects over 12,000 acres of forest, approximately half of which is longleaf pine. Some of the trees are well over 100 years old.

Also enrolled in the Service's Safe Harbor program for red-cockaded woodpeckers, Norfolk Southern has increased its red-cockaded woodpecker population from a baseline of 67 groups to over 80 groups. This population is thought to be the largest population on private land throughout the entire range of the red-cockaded woodpeckers. Past and current research projects have led to the banding of the entire red-cockaded woodpecker population at Brosnan Forest, in turn leading to Brosnan being a major donor population for red-cockaded woodpeckers needs across South Carolina.

The Service has many partners in longleaf pine restoration and red-cockaded woodpeckers recovery efforts. Norfolk Southern, through its efforts at Brosnan Forest and now, beyond its own borders, has been one of those shining examples of a true partner.

From Norfolk Southern's CEOs to its land managers, the commitment towards environmental stewardship has been unfaltering. It is therefore a great honor and pleasure to present Josh Raglin, representing Norfolk Southern Corporation, the Regional Director's Conservation Partners Award.

**Terrence Salt**  
Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the  
Interior on Everglades Restoration,  
Miami, FL

Terrence "Rock" Salt has worked for over two decades on large landscape scale restoration projects in South Florida. A retired Army Colonel with over 30 years of military service to our country and a former Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior on Everglades Restoration, he has recently been appointed as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army overseeing the Nation's civil works projects. He previously served as Executive Director of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force charged with coordinating Everglades Restoration policy and projects and advising agencies on emerging policies and issues.

Rock Salt has been an instrumental guide to the Service, helping advance fish and wildlife conservation at every step of the process and coordinating our agency's mission with the missions of National Park Service and U.S. Geological Survey. His experience, knowledge of the Everglades, and personal relationships in south Florida and Washington, DC have served an integral role in advancing projects that will provide surface water storage, seepage management, water conveyance, and hydrological connectivity, all for the purpose of restoring the south Florida Ecosystem.

Rock's wealth of experience has enhanced the Department's leadership role in Everglades Restoration and allowed the Service to achieve maximum conservation benefits for trust resources including Refuge lands, threatened and endangered species, wetlands, migratory birds, and fisheries.

This past year, Rock provided leadership for other important projects such as Modified Water Deliveries, Decentralization, and the C-111 Spreader Canal which will provide much needed benefits to trust resources. With Rock's assistance and commitment to conservation, the Service actively participated in all aspects of these efforts, helping meet agency goals in south Florida. His guidance has consistently provided on-the-ground benefits for fish and wildlife resources and cultivated the personal relationships that are the cornerstone of our success.

For the initiative he has exercised and the results he has achieved, Terrance Salt is presented the Regional Director's Conservation Award.