



RefugeUpdate

National Wildlife Refuge System



Youth Conservation Corps jobs for young people, like this group at Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge (CA), will be created with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. (USFWS)

Tremendous Challenge – Unprecedented Opportunity

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided more than \$200 million for the Refuge System, including funding for construction of new, energy-efficient headquarters offices/visitors centers on 11 refuges. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received approximately \$280 million. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar said the Act presents a “tremendous challenge and an unprecedented opportunity to invest in America’s timeless treasures, while helping working families and their communities prosper again.”

The list of Service projects includes \$115 million for construction, repair and energy efficiency retrofit projects, including but not exclusively on national wildlife refuges, and \$165 million for habitat restoration, deferred maintenance and capital improvement projects at Service facilities. The Service worked through a rigorous merit-based process to identify and prioritize investments to meet the criteria of the Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The projects must address high priority mission needs, generate the largest number of jobs in the shortest period of time, create lasting value for the American public – and funds must be obligated within 18 months.

Shovel-Ready Jobs

Construction of headquarters offices/visitor centers will provide jobs in some of the states with the highest unemployment rates, including California, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Honors

National Heavy Equipment Coordinator Steve Flanders has been honored with the Department of the Interior’s most prestigious safety and health award for his leadership in heavy equipment safety. He received the Safety Award of Excellence for his development of a successful safety training program, safety policies, monthly awareness publications and a network for distributing information about heavy equipment program needs. Flanders was praised as a safety champion who reaches far beyond routine expectations to protect others.

The entire team of regional heavy equipment coordinators was also presented with an the Department of the Interior’s Safety and Health Group Achievement Award. Pat Hickey (Region 1), Ed Bass (Region 2), Dale Pittman (Region 3), Stan Zazado (Region 4), Charles Glock (Region 5), Wade Briggs (Region 6) and Tom Siekaniec (Region 7) were honored



Greg Siekaniec

Chief's Corner

Secret No More

National wildlife refuges have long been one of America's best kept secrets. Those days may be over.

Coastal Living magazine "discovered" national wildlife refuges earlier this year when it named two — Chincoteague Refuge in Virginia and Key Deer Refuge in Florida — among its top 10 wildlife hot spots to visit. The magazine also included Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas among its 10 ideal places for wildflower viewing.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation, celebrating the 40th anniversary of its "Virginia is for Lovers" campaign — chose to feature three national wildlife refuges. Seven governors named national wildlife refuges as either first or second

choices for the U.S. Mint to feature on coins being created under the America's Beautiful National Parks Quarter Dollar Coin Act of 2008.

And just last week, the producer for Wild Horizons Productions came to the Refuge System seeking national wildlife refuges as sites for a documentary about North American wildlife, which will be aired on the Discovery Channel. Some of you may be hearing from them as producers contemplate how to portray the Refuge System and our mission.

So what will it mean if more people "discover" national wildlife refuges? Could we double the number of Refuge Friends? Could we enlist more volunteers? Could we interest youngsters in wildlife conservation as their profession or their personal passion? Could we double the

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RefugeUpdate

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Who knew that a rabbit could possibly be endangered? Page 5

FOCUS..Ready for Tomorrow

What must the Refuge System do today to achieve its mission tomorrow? Pages 6 to 15

Build It and They Will Come

Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge (WA) has a new wildlife trail and a new Friends group. Page 18

CARE: Restoring America's Wildlife Refuges

CARE says refuges need \$808 million per year by fiscal year 2013. Page 15

Honors — continued from page 1

for contributing to a model program in heavy equipment safety and training. These positions were all created in 2004 in an effort to maximize the efficiency and safe operation of the Service's heavy equipment fleet. (See Refuge Update May-June 2006).

A Partners in Conservation Award was also presented in May to the Rat Island Restoration Project for their work in eradicating rats and restoring biological diversity to an island in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. Rat Island had long been a haven for seabirds like tufted puffins, whiskered auklets and storm petrels. The Norway rat was introduced to the island during a shipwreck in the 18th century, eventually wiping out most of the nesting birds. This is the first island eradication effort in Alaska but it could become a model for others. The award was presented jointly to the Island Conservation of Santa Cruz (CA), The Nature Conservancy, the U.S.



National Heavy Equipment Coordinator Steve Flanders received the Department of the Interior Safety Award of Excellent for leadership in heavy equipment safety.

Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. 🦅

Picasso and Friends en Route to Sacramento

Picasso left Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Minnesota on March 28. Within a week, he had made it to Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa. By mid-May, he was in Wisconsin and heading west.

Picasso is one of the 22 small stuffed birds “hatched” at Upper Miss Refuge, helping to take geocaching to a new level. An additional bird – a blue goose named Webster – was released at Sacramento National Wildlife in California. Each bird is equipped with a travel bug – a small metal tag bearing a unique tracking number that can be followed online at www.geocaching.com.

And each stuffed bird has a mission, stated on its attached card: “I want to go to a national wildlife refuge in every state. Take a picture of you and me in front of the refuge sign; then place me in a geocache near the refuge. After my mission is completed, I want to migrate back to the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge where I was hatched.”

Each travel bug – and therefore each stuffed bird – has its own online journal that follows its movements as geocachers carry it from place to place. Geocaching, as explained online, is a “high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure seekers equipped with GPS (Global Positioning System) devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, outdoors and then share your experiences online.”

Geocaching Gets People Outside

Each bird at Upper Miss Refuge was given to a new or veteran geocacher during the March Cure Cabin Fever event. One geocacher – new to the refuge – has already written online, “This place is absolutely awesome! I live only 15 miles away and have never been here. Thank you for bringing me here. I would never have found it without you.”

“Geocaching gets people outside. They have to come to the refuge to get the migrating birds, but they don’t put



Youngsters learn to use a GPS device at Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Minnesota. (USFWS)

geocaches on refuges,” says ranger Cindy Samples at Upper Miss Refuge. Because it is illegal to hide containers on a refuge, geocachers look for caches/containers nearby.

Each time the bird is left in a cache, the coordinates of the cache are recorded online for the next person to find. Unlike real migratory birds, these birds have no deadline to reach California and they could even be carried overseas before they get to Sacramento Refuge.

Geocachers had high praise for the “event cache” at Upper Miss Refuge and promised to keep each named bird and its unique travel bug moving:

“Will get your falcon flying shortly. Just discovered that it makes a sound when pressed. This has caused much excitement in the household.”

“If I can get this little guy away from my cat Bismarck, I’ll get Mandy moving again shortly.”

“Maggie is a funny name for a mallard drake. I will take him to a refuge or two and then send him off to migrate.”

In the Beginning

Several years ago, Samples used a Challenge Cost Share grant to buy 120 GPS units to be shared among the four district offices on the refuge. She had already implemented several varieties of virtual geocaching (see Refuge Update July August 2007). Now she is pointing out to the local Chamber of Commerce that geocachers are a lot like birders – they come to town for an event and spend their tourism dollars locally.

“This is an excellent opportunity to get people to parts of the refuge they have never seen,” adds ranger Pam Steinhaus. “We’re reaching a new group of people. We’re using geocaching to get people connected to nature but also to get them in touch with refuges.” 🦅

Finding History Right in the Neighborhood

by Jeffrey D. Sommer

For thousands of years, Native Americans and more recent immigrants have left traces of their lives and livelihoods on what is now Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge in central lower Michigan. Since 1999, the Historical Society of Saginaw County (HSSC), in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has conducted archaeological research at the refuge, unearthing hundreds of fragments of

Data from the excavations are adding to our understanding of the Middle Woodland and Late Prehistoric inhabitants of the Saginaw Valley and the environment in which they lived. In addition to the animals now abundant in the region – such as white-tailed deer, beaver, raccoon and walleye – analysis of faunal remains from these sites is also revealing that several species now extirpated were once common, including elk/wapiti, black bear, lake sturgeon and three-ridge mussel.

the Historical Society's laboratory, where they are cleaned, catalogued, studied and stored. This arrangement keeps these important cultural resources locally available to researchers and the public.

Information and artifacts from the refuge sites have been incorporated into a permanent exhibit at the Society's Castle Museum of Saginaw County History. Through exhibits, public lectures, educational programs in schools, and hands-on participation by volunteers, the archaeological resources of the refuge form an important educational platform for the community. The refuge also plans to create a display of artifacts including points (arrowheads) which were confiscated as part of a law enforcement investigation. The points were taken illegally from the refuge and returned by the U.S. District Court in Bay City following resolution of the case several years ago.

Layers of History

Each year, hundreds of school children visit the museum and are given guided tours of the archaeology exhibit. In an effort to reach even more students, the museum is developing a self-contained traveling exhibit in a trailer that will be towed to schools throughout the county.

Knowing the location and extent of archaeological resources will be a tremendous asset when making future cultural resource management decisions. "This work is peeling away layers of a story that has yet to be told and the extraction of the artifacts has to be done precisely or the story will be lost," says Deputy Refuge Manager Ed DeVries. "The protection and preservation of Shiawassee Refuge's cultural resources is an important part of the refuge's mission. We are fortunate to have the interest and energy of professional historians, so that this story can be explored and preserved in a way that will benefit the refuge, in addition to future generations." 

Jeffrey D. Sommer is curator of archaeology for the Historical Society of Saginaw County, MI.



Archaeological research at Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge (MI) reveals signs of human activities from about 4,000 years ago. (Jeffrey Sommer)

tools, fire hearths and trash pits as well as food remains – all cultural resources as important as the natural resources protected by the refuge.

The sites reveal signs of human activities from about 4,000 years ago, including evidence of Native American hunting and fishing as well as trade between Native Americans and some of the first Europeans to enter the region in the 17th and 18th centuries. There are artifacts from the logging industry that dominated the local economy in the latter part of the 19th century in addition to 20th century coal mining, farming and recreation.

Mussel Shell Spoons

These animals provided food and hides. Bones and antlers became tools. Mussel shells could have been used as spoons, made into beads or crushed and used to temper pottery clay. Curiously, migratory waterfowl, the protection of which prompted the establishment of the Shiawassee Refuge, are infrequently found and do not seem to have been a resource widely used by the early Native Americans.

Under a cooperative agreement with the Service, archaeological materials recovered from the refuge are taken to

Recovering the New England Cottontail

by Kate O'Brien

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in Maine has embarked on a three-year drive to jump-start habitat restoration for the New England cottontail, once so abundant that it was a favorite game animal, but now so rare that it is a candidate for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has provided \$240,000 for a full-time restoration coordinator in Maine as well as two demonstration areas on the refuge.

The New England cottontail is a small, shy, brownish gray rabbit, commonly referred to in Maine as a “coney.” There are only two known national wildlife refuges that are home to this rare species – Rachel Carson Refuge in Maine and Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex.

An Endangered Rabbit?

The New England cottontail requires impenetrable brush thickets for survival. Forest maturation, development and habitat fragmentation have all made this habitat quite rare. Much of the remaining habitat in Maine is in small blocks of fewer than 10 acres.

Additionally, non-native plants and animals – such as the eastern cottontail and white-tailed deer – have proliferated and reduced the available food.

Using Maine Outdoor Heritage and Challenge Cost Share grants, Rachel Carson Refuge is working with researchers from the University of New Hampshire to find new populations and asking landowners to report sightings. While many residents recall hunting the New England cottontail with their grandfathers, only a few reports of extant populations have trickled in.

The way to protect the species from extinction is to manage, conserve and connect habitats. Managed shrublands require periodic disturbance, such as brush hogging, tree removal, prescribed fire or other mechanical treatments. There will be costs to manage these lands, but the benefits to the cottontail and such declining bird species as the American woodcock, Eastern towhee and prairie warbler are enormous.

The refuge faces another challenge: to change public attitudes toward these messy but vital habitats. Most people don't value their shrublands as much as they do their fields and forests. Rachel

Carson Refuge offers workshops and meets with local land trusts and schools to demonstrate the value of thickets to wildlife and people – including the opportunity for superior berry picking. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, along with the Environmental Defense Fund, Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, NFWF and the Natural Resource Conservation Service published “A Landowner's Guide to New England Cottontail Management” (www.edf.org/cottontail).

It's All About Partnerships

To help restore habitat beyond the refuge, the NFWF grant has been matched by more than \$700,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from more than a dozen public and private groups, including the Environmental Defense Fund, New Hampshire Fish and Game, Wildlife Management Institute, Central Maine Power, American Forest Foundation, Wells Reserve/Laudholm Trust, Maine Forest Service and AmeriCorps/Maine Conservation Corps. Maine Master Gardeners and Defenders of Wildlife Volunteer Corps assisted with several planting days as the refuge continues to propagate native shrubs from seeds and cuttings.

Even third graders from Eliot are campaigning to save the New England cottontail with their own Web site (<http://www.msad35.net/mdodge/Welcome.html>) and letters to President Obama. The youngsters are encouraging neighbors to plant berries and clover and to build habitat for the New England cottontail. According to one student Web page “You need to make thickets by planting bushes and trees and throwing sticks on the ground. Throwing sticks on the ground makes a safe hiding place.”

The New England cottontail population is believed to have dipped to just 300 or so in Maine. There is still be time to restore the cottontail throughout its former range in Maine, but time is running out. 

Kate O'Brien is the wildlife biologist at Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, ME.



In Maine, Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge has launched a three-year drive to jump-start habitat restoration for the New England cottontail. (USFWS)

Focus... Ready for Tomorrow

The Refuges of Tomorrow

For almost 30 years, Don Hultman, newly retired manager of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, has had a front-row seat as the Refuge System has grown and evolved. *Refuge Update* talked with him about what the next 30 or so years might hold for the Refuge System.

What are some of the most striking changes you have seen?

How many pages do you have? Technology has been perhaps the greatest innovation, from the use of e-mail to GIS analysis and field GPS units. Information moves much more quickly, response times for requests have been reduced, and managers have better data than ever before to help guide decision-making.

Also, refuge managers now work beyond the boundaries of their units much more than in the past. Partnerships with states, other federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and citizen-conservation groups (Friends) have become increasingly important to addressing off-refuge challenges that affect on-refuge goals and objectives.

What's in store for your successors?

Hunting and fishing will continue to be important recreational pursuits on refuges, but they will begin to be dwarfed by non-consumptive uses such as wildlife observation, hiking and education. Some have predicted that wildlife viewing will increase 60 percent by 2050 while hunting will decline 11 percent.

In many ways, it will be business as usual, but the usual business will continue to evolve! For example, 25 years ago there was no Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. Service employees "invented" the program by responding in a creative way to conservation needs and challenges off refuge. Only later did Congress affirm the private lands program through separate funding. Fifteen years ago, refuge



Don Hultman retired in June 2009 as refuge manager of Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. (USFWS)

Friends groups were very rare, but the Service made it a goal to increase citizen support and participation.

Employees will continue to create the Refuge System of the future. And of course Congress will likely pass legislation that will affect our duties and responsibilities, especially in the areas of climate change, clean water and air and initiatives and opportunities yet defined.

Adapting to the accelerating challenges of climate change will likely be one of our greatest challenges, especially for refuges in coastal areas. Creative ways of enlarging and connecting habitats will be a top priority. More and more managers will be in charge of multiple stations that are tied together ecologically.

Internally, we face a challenge in getting our own employees and managers outside on the lands and waters we manage! We need to make time to stay connected

to the land, to understand its rhythms and to let our firsthand observations of nature guide our decisions.

What new skills will managers need?

As always, the basics of biology, written and verbal communications skills and strong interpersonal skills. In addition, technological skills and a willingness to learn new technology skills will be essential.

To prepare for the future, we need to identify and nurture emerging leaders, those people who show the intelligence, drive, self-confidence, high self-esteem and interpersonal skills to lead refuges and wetland management districts and move into the ranks of upper management. We need to urge these potential leaders to move around to gain experience and insight by taking positions in the regional offices and in Washington.

What about refuge staff?

We will see more and more specialization. Refuges will need media outreach personnel, hydrologists, planners, entomologists, botanists and a whole range of other specialists, depending on the individual refuge setting and needs.

Even fewer employees will come from a farming or rural background. That means that many of the outdoor skills that were given in the past will have to be acquired through training and on-the-job experience. Our staff will be more diverse, and women will likely become the majority in refuge manager ranks and mid- and upper-management. We will have many more people of color. These are good changes, and they will help us stay relevant to America because we will look more like America. 

We Don't Do This Alone

by Edward G. Henry

Refuges are like puzzles. Assembling them requires ordering a jumble of pieces to make a proper picture.

Over the past couple of decades, refuge managers have had to manage refuge puzzles that are increasing in size and complexity. Even with the additional training and tools that assist refuge managers and their staffs in running national wildlife refuges in the 21st century, we cannot complete the puzzle alone.

Two of the most effective puzzle pieces are volunteers and Friends groups. In many cases, this expanding source of help and support is the only viable tool for meeting certain challenges such as keeping up with small maintenance tasks, meeting and greeting our ever increasing number of visitors and communicating our needs to elected officials on an ongoing basis.

Volunteers are coming to our refuges from all walks of life these days ... just look at the license plates on their cars, listen to their many accents or note their regional and international expressions. Scout groups and students are looking to fulfill community service hours increasingly required by schools. College students gain experience through volunteer internships, bringing energy and enthusiasm and the latest in university thinking; some even decide to choose the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a career.

Retirees come to share a lifetime of experience. Their years in the fields of maintenance, visitor services and habitat management can add new facets to refuge programs and transfer skills to other staff members and volunteers. The mentoring that can be provided by our older volunteers, especially those who spent a career in government, cannot be underestimated.



Volunteers at San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge (TX) learn to map invasive species. (Mandy Tul The Nature Conservancy)

Essential Partnerships

The number of Refuge Friends groups is growing rapidly. While Friends organizations advocate for their refuges and the Refuge System, members also come with individual skill sets, personalities and opinions. The public support, access to elected officials, fundraising and assistance with public programs and special events expand a refuge's ability to deliver and grow its programs.

Since Friends groups are independent organizations, it is imperative for refuge managers to work closely with them, respecting their independence while ensuring they work within their charters to support the refuge and its goals. Finding the right balance between the Friends group's interests and goals, which may not be in lock step with a refuge goal or a refuge manager's philosophy, can become the foundation for a wider source of support and funding. A Friends group's push for

more wildlife-dependent recreation, for example, may bring new visitors, new support, and ultimately, new funding to a refuge. Perhaps more than any other new piece in the refuge management puzzle, the essential partnership between a refuge and a Friends group underscores how the world of refuge management continues to evolve.

Technology is a puzzle piece that can be used to recruit and inform Friends, volunteers and visitors. Even though we are an agency devoted to the land, we should not ignore the value of virtual real estate, working to strengthen people's attachments to the natural world. 

Edward G. Henry is refuge manager at Walkill River and Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey.

Focus... Ready for Tomorrow

Alaska's First People Find Careers on the Last Frontier

by Mike Boylan

The 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) were landmark laws to promote self-determination by Alaskan Natives. ANCSA promoted economic self-sufficiency by granting land to Native people, tribes and corporations as antidote to troubled reservations in the Lower 48. ANILCA ensured Alaska's enlarged federal conservation landscape continued traditional uses of wildlife by rural people, including Natives.

Today, American Indian and Alaska Native students have one of the highest school dropout rates of any ethnic group in the country. Three out of 10 Native students don't graduate from high school. Research has shown that Native students succeed in schools that function like a village with social relationships similar to their communities so they gain self-confidence which enables them to master the curriculum.

In 1998, the University of Alaska began the Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP) to mentor exceptional Native students from high school through college with rigorous course work leading to internships and careers as engineers. ANSEP sponsors became a who's who of corporate Alaska, e.g. Conoco Phillips, Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum, Wells Fargo and Native corporations.

More than 60 percent of Alaska is federally-owned as national wildlife refuges, parks, forests and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) areas but few agencies have Natives in professional positions. The first of Alaska's 16 national wildlife refuges was established in 1909 but the few Natives working



The Summer Bridge Class of 2008 stands in front of the canoe-shaped home of the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program at the University of Alaska Anchorage. (ANSEP)

for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service were hired under a special authority in the ANILCA legislation as "Refuge Information Technicians," lower-graded liaisons to local villages.

In 2007, Service employee Mike Rearden was eyeing retirement after a decade managing Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. With residents of 56 villages as his constituents, Rearden had an extraordinary sense of Native people and issues.

When his son graduated as an ANSEP engineer from the University of Alaska in 2008, Rearden realized that despite its name, ANSEP didn't recruit any science students – just engineers. ANSEP's visionary creator, engineer Herb Schroeder offered Rearden the chance to develop a biological science component for ANSEP.

Grooming Scientists for the Land

Rearden postponed retirement to recruit Native young people as fish and wildlife students. He moved from Yukon Delta Refuge to the University's Anchorage campus and soon gathered

ANSEP science supporters from Alaska Department of Fish and Game, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Forest Service and more. ANSEP's Summer Bridge program prepares high school graduates for college; 85 percent of these students graduate from college.

In 1998, eight of these students took internships with oil companies; in 2007, 23 students had internships, one-third with refuges and other land agencies, including Yukon Delta Refuge and Kenai Fisheries Resource Office. The interns conducted

wildlife surveys, collected and analyzed data, banded waterfowl and worked at fisheries. ANSEP students who enroll in the Student Cooperative Education Program (SCEP) are eligible for non-competitive permanent appointments with the Service, although many have chosen to pursue graduate degrees. "Thirty years after ANILCA we finally have the ability to enable Native people who live on the land and depend upon its wildlife to truly have a voice in managing the land and resources," Rearden says. "Not just as stakeholders or in seasonal jobs but as managers, biologists and other professional positions. Alaska Natives now have a career path within the Service and other resource agencies."

In February 2009, Rearden retired and was succeeded by Beth Spangler, a University of Alaska alumna who had led the Service's Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program. She has a familiarity with rural Alaska that serves her well. With 20 students in the program and more added each year, ANSEP grads will soon enrich the workforce of Alaska's state and federal natural resource agencies. 

Mike Boylan is a refuge supervisor in Alaska.

Googley Organizations

By Janet Carrier Ady

Our education and training programs must continually adopt new approaches to meet emerging needs as the face of conservation changes. Remember this television commercial? (Your answer will betray your generation!) An older lady, looking at a beleaguered hamburger, inquires, “Where’s the beef?” Americans now ask similar questions about all areas of our society: they want to know about the important parts of our work.

“Where’s the partnership?”

We have evolved from a “big brother” era of government into an era of transparency and collaboration. This will only expand in the future, as the recent book *What Would Google Do?*, by Jeff Jarvis, explains. “Googley” organizations present an unfinished product, then let the customers finish it, tailoring it to their needs and interests. We will need to depend on our customers – visitors and partners – to help us craft our refuge programs in ways meaningful to them. Learning to invite and take advantage of public participation and collaborative natural resource management are essential skills.

“Where’s the diversity?”

We are in the midst of a demographic shift in American populations. Soon, Hispanic audiences will become a majority. (Are we remembering to provide Spanish versions of materials?) Recruiting younger employees into the workplace will require flexibility and adjustments, not only to hairstyles, tattoos and musical preferences, but for work-life balance and workplace expectations. Updated courses in volunteer management and mentoring Friends groups will address working with modern audiences.

“Show me the money!”

The Service has an opportunity to turn the economic downturn into a plus. Reconnecting with nature on a national wildlife refuge is a low cost recreational



The Refuge Academy at the National Conservation Training Center teaches skills needed to motivate people to navigate change – building strong relationships and creating trust by delivering results. (Matt Poole)

and physical fitness option. Getting conservation crews out onto refuge lands, working to replenish habitat, will create jobs, invigorate infrastructure and open workers’ eyes to the wonders of wildlife. Training our workforce to

work effectively with students and youth groups will enable us to employ youth leaders as they foster connections with future conservationists.

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Focus... Ready for Tomorrow

Collaborating to Face Collective Challenges

by Amy Gaskill

In a 1983 trends report, senior leaders in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified the need for managers with collaboration skills: “Long-range trends showed that managers could expect economic uncertainty, population growth, migration to the Sun Belt, spreading urbanization and the pressure of expanding agricultural and minerals extraction to compete with wildlife habitat.” Today, as urbanization moves communities closer to refuge boundaries, these skills have become an increasingly important part of a manager’s portfolio.

In 2008, the Pacific and Pacific Southwest regions launched a three-part Collaborative Problem Solving Project that includes training, hands-on apprenticeships and internal consulting teams. This project is being developed jointly by the Service, the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University, the Center for Collaborative Policy at Sacramento State University, the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution.

The goal is to improve decision-making associated with natural resource issues affecting the Service, other federal agencies, states and non-governmental organizations – all by using collaborative problem-solving techniques. Through training and practical application, the plan is to develop employees with experience in problem analysis, collaboration process design and implementation.

To meet regional training needs, Portland State University developed a workshop titled “Introduction to Collaborative Governance.” More than 24 Service employees from five states, including about a dozen from national wildlife refuges, have completed the full week of training. Offered twice in 2008, the program is scheduled again for this summer.



Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon is taking advantage of new training to develop its CCP in a more collaborative manner. (Terrie Miller)

Graduates of the training may choose an apprenticeship in which they will exercise the skills they have gained in the classroom by working under the supervision of expert practitioners in the collaboration field. In the future, the Service hopes to call upon these individuals to create “internal consulting teams” designed to assist managers with difficult natural resource issues involving multiple parties. Both the apprentice program and the creation of internal consulting teams are planned for late 2009.

Finding Common Ground

Several years ago, Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in southeastern Oregon joined ranchers, private landowners, government agencies, businesses, and environmental and citizens groups to form the High Desert Partnership. The Partnership, a non-partisan group that

serves as a neutral forum, seeks to coordinate efforts to enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyles in the High Desert.

The refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) is one topic of great interest to many members of the Partnership. Refuge manager Tim Bodeen says the Partnership will serve as bridge builders back to the community to provide clarity and transparency during the CCP process.

To better understand how to integrate more collaborative processes into the planning process, senior managers from the refuge recently attended the Portland State University training. As a result, the refuge hired expert practitioners from Oregon Consensus at Portland State University to help design and guide the process. In addition, one of

the Service's collaboration training graduates is an apprentice on the project – all in hopes that by developing the CCP in a more collaborative manner, the Service may encounter more support during its adoption and implementation.

“The Pacific Region faces complex multi-party resource issues,” said Robyn Thorson, regional director. “Our challenge is to engage early with innovative approaches to find common ground and invest others in arriving at solutions. Grooming employees with expertise in this field helps equip us with the tools that we need to face our collective challenges.”

The need is being recognized nationwide as well. “The need for collaboration is greater than our capacity to provide it,” says Jay Slack, director of NCTC. “We want to help facilitate the development of ‘collaborologists’ to meet our agency’s mission, ensuring that it fits into the greater social context.” Collaboration training adapted from the Portland State University model is expected to be offered later this year at NCTC.

For additional information about the Region 1/8 collaborative problem solving project please contact Anne Badgley, former regional director of the Pacific Region, and now liaison between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University at anne_badgley@fws.gov. For information about the PSU collaboration training program see the PSU website at www.eli.pdx.edu/collaboration.

Amy Gaskill is a public affairs specialist in the Pacific Region.

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“Where’s the technology?”

Our visitors expect user-friendly Web sites and social media. The generation that grew up playing video games can often be “hooked” on nature via GPS activities and digital photography. A workforce facile in new media will be able to engage groups otherwise reluctant to go outside. At the same time, biologists and land managers will be applying technological solutions to more effectively and efficiently obtain information and strategically conserve habitat.

“Where’s the green?”

Public awareness of climate change has rekindled the green movement, and all aspects of society are becoming “greenwashed.” Our messages and practices need to clearly link wildlife conservation with climate change. Our decision makers, engineers and other personnel need state-of-the-art training in green building design and maintenance as well as finding sources of recycled and recyclable materials. We also need to exploit our capacity for distance learning and communications.

“Where’s the engagement?”

The Service should be asking, “Where’s the engagement?” with every conservation program we initiate. Connecting people with nature must

 *“We should be asking, ‘Where’s the engagement?’ with every conservation program we initiate.”*

become second nature to us. How are we developing future conservationists, not only those we currently employ, but potential recruits? Connecting people with nature early in life will

form a base of support for strategic habitat conservation and adapting to, or even halting, changing climate. Major league baseball does not expect to recruit players who never played in the Little League. How can we expect young people to choose natural resource careers if they never participate in conservation education or recreational activities?

So, here we are, back to the heady political, social and environmental times of the 1970s. In many ways, the future is what used to be. We must demonstrate willingness to take risks and courage to deal with change. The perennial leadership skills necessary to motivate people to navigate change – building strong relationships and creating trust by delivering results – have served us well and will continue to do so. And, we still need to remember to take time to reconnect with nature ourselves and enjoy the benefits of our conservation work. 

Janet Ady is chief, Division of Education Outreach, National Conservation Training

Focus... Ready for Tomorrow

Reaching Our Audience in New Ways

by Brad Phillips

On March 31, *The Chicago Sun-Times* announced that it is filing for bankruptcy. A day earlier, *The Detroit Free-Press* and *The Detroit News* stopped delivering newspapers on the four least profitable days of the week – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday – and will only make truncated issues available through retailers and online on those days.

Earlier, Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* closed down, and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* went Web-only. *The Ann-Arbor News* is closing in July. The parent companies for *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Chicago Tribune* and *Miami Herald* are in bankruptcy. Papers in San Francisco, Boston and Tucson are at risk. In total, at least 120 newspapers in the United States have shut down since January 2008.

According to a source quoted in a recent CNN.com article, the nation's print newspapers will disappear by 2015. The author of "The Vanishing Newspaper," Philip Meyer, is a bit more optimistic with his prediction that the final copy of the final newspaper will be delivered in 2043.

Either way, newspapers are in trouble – and organizations intent on carrying their message to the public can no longer rely on them for reaching the same mass audiences they once did.

I'll miss newspapers, and so will many others from the "old school." But whether we're ready or not, the "new school" of social media will soon be the primary way people receive information. That means that organizations need to Twitter. And get on Facebook, and upload videos to YouTube, and issue multimedia press releases instead of standard text-only releases.

Entering The New School

Over the past few months, I've had countless conversations with people about the changing nature of the media.



Refuges must turn to new media and social networking to generate interest in nature. (Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge, MD - USFWS)

The majority of people I speak with lament the fact that "real reporting" is taking a back seat to blog posts and Facebook. They have a valid point. But they're also missing an important point.

Media relations is primarily about reaching your target audience with relevant information and persuading people to take your desired action.

“Although the medium may change, your ability to touch your audience doesn't have to.”

In days of yore, this was accomplished with cave drawings, town criers and brilliant orators. Later, newspapers, radio, and television did the trick. Today, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are picking up the slack.

Twitter, the social networking site with more than seven million members, is

held with particular scorn by most of my dinner companions. "How can anyone communicate something meaningful in 140 characters?" some ask.

But what if *The New York Times* had a circulation of seven million people? Twitter does – so it's worth your time to learn how to communicate through it. What if *The Wall Street Journal* reached a whopping 66 million people like Facebook does? It sure would be worth your time.

Here's the bottom line: although the medium may change, your ability to touch your audience doesn't have to.

New media: You may love them or hate them; find them delightful or a sign of the apocalypse. It doesn't matter. Either way, you'll need them to reach your audience, and probably sooner rather than later. 

Brad Phillips is the founder and president of Phillips Media Relations. He was a journalist for ABC News and CNN, and headed the media relations department for the world's second largest environmental group.

Social Networking

Web traffic to the blog pages of the top 10 online newspapers grew 210 percent last year. More than 75 percent of Americans who use the Internet watch videos online.

How can national wildlife refuges or their Friends organizations take advantage of this vast new world of communication opportunities?

“We are living in an exciting time,” says a breathless Michael Gale, special assistant in External Affairs. Gale is a member of the Service’s New Media Working Group, which promotes the responsible use of new technology in meeting the Service mission.

Blogs – According to the Service policy (visit www.fws.gov/policy) blogs must be treated as official government communications. A blog can provide a more personal and interactive way for audiences to communicate with the Service.

Some critical questions should be answered in managing a blog: what is the outreach objective? Who will provide content, and review and post visitor comments? How do you handle a negative comment about your refuge? If the blog manager decides to respond to visitor comments, the Service blog policy requires that those responses must follow the same authorization process as the initial blog postings. A list of other government agencies with blogs may be found at www.usa.gov/Topics/Reference_Shelf/News/blog.shtml.

Blogging by refuges and other Service personnel is possible now, as long as it is done in accordance with the blogging policy, but the New Media Working Group is urging patience until a variety of blogging tools is produced. Over the next few months, blogging tips, guidance, a planning template and blogging software will be made available on the Intranet.



Facebook/YouTube/Flickr – The General Services Administration has signed terms of service agreements with Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube and a few

other new media sites to allow federal employees to use these applications without violating federal regulations. In many cases, however, the sites may remain blocked on Department of the Interior computers just because of their heavy graphics and potential security risks.

Many refuge Friends groups already have Facebook accounts, including Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge (MS) and Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (CO). The Service is exploring adopting an official presence on multiple social and new media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube. At that point, individual refuges would be able to create and post their own videos to a Service YouTube channel. Many Friends groups also share photos on Flickr and other photo-sharing sites.



Twitter – This “micro-blogging”

service enables users to send very short messages, or “tweets” (maximum 140 characters), to anyone who signs up to receive them. Messages are received on Twitter or Facebook sites, cellphones or e-mail. Twitter cannot be accessed from Department of the Interior computers.

A Twitter sub-team of the New Media Working Group is developing plans to advise Service employees about the most effective ways to use Twitter. It can be a challenging undertaking: whereas a blog might be updated weekly, Twitter is ideally updated several times a day.



RSS – Really Simple Syndication allows individuals to subscribe to information

feeds automatically when there is new content on a Web site. The Service offers an RSS feed to Web site visitors from its home page, as do many of the regional and program Web pages. 🐾

For Service employees, instructions for downloading and using many of these applications are available on the Intranet at <https://intranet.fws.gov/newmedia/>.

🐾 *“We are living in an exciting time.”*

Tell your friends that Refuge Update is available online at fws.gov/refuges. Past issues and an article index may also be accessed online.

Focus... Ready for Tomorrow

Who Will Speak Out for Wildlife?

by Emilyn Sheffield

Where were you in 1967? Were your kids in college? Were you starting your career? Not yet born? What is the significance of 1967 anyway?

The U.S. population passed 200 million in 1967, up from 100 million in 1915. Projected to double again from 200 million to 400 million in a mere 76 years, these “million person milestones” provide a human scale to think about population change and wildlife refuges. There will be 400 million people living in the United States in 2043. How many will be wildlife advocates?

Three aspects of American population change – pace, place, and face – will influence the future of wildlife and wildlife refuges. A fourth aspect – choice – will ultimately determine the future for wildlife. What choices will we make about the value of wildlife protection and wildlife refuges? How will our values inform our choices?

The *pace* of population change is accelerating. It took 139 years for the United States to reach the 100 million milestone, but only 39 years to go from 200 million to 300 million. The *place* of change is increasingly urban; 80 percent of us now live in urban or suburban areas, up from about 63 percent in the late 1960s. The *place* of change is also in the south and west. By 2030, the Census Bureau projects that nearly 72 million additional people will live in these two census regions. Can we choose to grow in ways that allow people and wildlife to thrive?

The *face* of change is varied in terms age, race, ethnicity and country of origin. At one end of the lifespan, baby boomers will more than double the percentage of the population over age 65 (about 20 percent in 2043 compared to 10 percent in 1967). At the other end of the scale, in 2005 45 percent of all school children were children of color, neatly mirroring

the percentage of the U.S. population that will be persons of color in 2043.

Latinos and Asians will increase the most, approximately doubling their percentages of the population. African Americans and Native Americans will maintain or slightly increase their proportional share of the population. Like the last 100 million, many of the next 100 million people will be immigrants or their U.S. born children. Do our refuges attract visitors and advocates from all the faces of America?

Refuge professionals must integrate wildlife issues with the aspirations of older, more urban and more diverse Americans, yet also engage younger visitors. They must also share (and explain more simply) the research that guides decision-making so that a wider range of allies and advocates can understand and commit to securing a future for wildlife. Finally, refuges must share stories of successful recovery efforts to inspire people to work together to preserve wildlife, especially by

working in partnership with Friends and other organizations:

- Expand educational programming about national wildlife refuges where children and families gather – at schools and community festivals.
- Reconnect baby boomers with their natural values through volunteerism, nature study, and Friends groups. Boomers came of age during the environmental movement. They can become passionate and powerful allies as they move into their post-career years.
- Use the I-Triad – invite, include, involve – for outreach, a strategy created by Deb Chavez of the Forest Service to engage Latinos: Invite (learn about Latino perceptions), Include (bring Latinos into decision-making), and Involve (add Latinos to Friends boards). Use the I-Triad to connect with any community of interest.

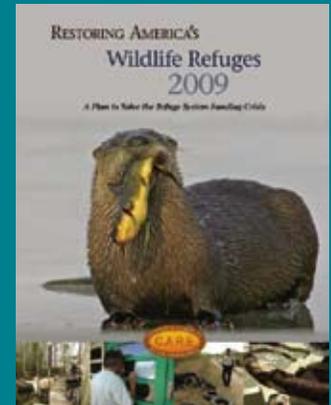


Refuge professionals must integrate wildlife issues with the aspirations of older, more urban and more diverse Americans, yet also engage younger visitors. (Steve Hillebrand)

CARE: Restoring America's Wildlife Refuges

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) has determined that the National Wildlife Refuge System needs \$808 million per year by fiscal year 2013. This national coalition of 23 wildlife, sporting, conservation and scientific organizations has published a funding plan that begins with a call for \$514 million in fiscal year 2010, building toward an annual budget of \$808 million as the baseline funding level needed to protect water quality and wildlife and

ensure a positive experience for visitors. The full report is available at www.fundrefuges.org/care/CareHome.html.



- Link wildlife dependent recreation to other, more popular forms of outdoor recreation or new technology. Offer wildlife walks (rather than hikes) since more people walk than watch wildlife. Encourage visitors to use cell phones and social networking media to share your refuge with others.

 *"Refuge professionals must integrate wildlife issues with the aspirations of older, more urban and more diverse Americans, yet also engage younger visitors."*

- Start or expand community-based stewardship programs. Habitat restoration projects revitalize people and places. School-based plant nurseries grow allies and advocates as well as native plants.

Changing demographics are creating tomorrow's America today. There will be 400 million Americans by 2043. What values will they hold and what choices will they make? How many will be wildlife advocates? 

Emilyn Sheffield is a professor at California State University, Chico. For references and additional information, write to esheffield@csuchico.edu.

Tremendous Challenge — continued from page 1

These refuges will have new offices/visitor centers:

- San Diego (CA)
- Texas Chenier Plains (TX)
- Pea Island/Alligator River (NC)
- San Luis (CA)
- Rocky Mountain Arsenal (CO)
- Kealia Pond (HI)
- Upper Mississippi (WI – LaCrosse)
- Hagerman (TX)
- Audubon (ND)
- Tennessee (TN)
- Long Island (NY)

All new or replacement buildings that require heating or cooling will be designed to LEEDS energy-efficiency standards, including the use of solar or geothermal energy when possible. Specially designed vertical wind turbines will be installed at several refuges in Alaska.

Youth Employment

The Recovery Act will enable the Service to create about 550 seasonal and temporary jobs for young people on nearly 300 national wildlife refuges and

national fish hatcheries over the next 18 months. Many will be hired through the Youth Conservation Corps (high school students), Student Conservation Association (college students) and AmeriCorps.

An \$80,000 contract with the Montana Conservation Corps, for example, will enable a crew of six young employees to work for 20 weeks this summer, controlling invasive weed species on seven national wildlife refuges and private lands that are part of the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Montana.

Habitat Restoration

More than 170 habitat restoration projects will be undertaken, including removing structures that prevent fish from accessing spawning or feeding areas, reforestation projects and removal of invasive plants. An estuary restoration project at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge (WA) will help recover Chinook salmon. 

A state-by-state accounting of Recovery Act funds for Service projects is available online at <http://recovery.doi.gov/>.

Around The Refuge System

Washington

A trumpeter swan named Solo found his way home again to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, where he was first banded 25 years ago. Biologists believe Solo may be one of the original cygnets

biologist Mike Rule. Solo is a year-round resident at Turnbull Refuge as long as there is open water. His location when the water freezes is unknown, but it is believed to be close since he returns almost within a day when the water thaws.

The trees were planted by Environmental Synergy, Inc., which will also monitor their carbon accrual. More than 30 partners participated in the Marais des Cygnes Refuge habitat restoration.



An elderly trumpeter swan named Solo found his way home again to Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (WA).

reintroduced to Turnbull Refuge in the 1960s. A reintroduction program successfully created a resident flock of trumpeter swans at Turnbull Refuge by 1976. Severe drought and the decision to discontinue winter feeding and pond aeration resulted in a precipitous decline in the population and by 1980, there was only one active breeding pair – including Solo. Major causes of mortality were shooting, power line collisions and predators. Solo's mate was killed by a coyote in 1988, but the male kept coming back to the refuge each spring.

In 1992, a female joined Solo for several seasons. They built a nest platform but laid no eggs. The female disappeared in 1994 and no regular family group has formed since then.

Biologists have determined that Solo could be 43-46 years old, even though most swans live only 20-30 years. "He is a real senior citizen and likely breaking some longevity records," says refuge

Missouri

Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri has launched a new series of family programs on the First Friday of each month. The first event in March drew more than 200 visitors, even though the nearest town only has a population of 67.

All events are free. First Friday in March featured a local actress portraying children's author Laura Ingalls Wilder, who talked about country life in the late nineteenth century. Many visitors used spotting scopes to view pelicans using refuge wetlands as a migratory resting stop. First Friday in April featured a turkey calling contest, hayrides, backyard gardening tips and a scavenger hunt for kids.

Other events planned for First Fridays between now and October include an interpretive program about hunting and fishing, outdoor magic, several programs of local music and an entertaining program called "Fishing Magicians," which encourages people to take advantage of Missouri's fisheries and understand aquatic ecosystems.

"It's back the way it used to be when you could get together in your community on a Friday night," says refuge office assistant John Benson.

Oklahoma

The selenite crystal digging field on the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge re-opened in April after being closed for two years. The dig area was closed in April 2007 when a Boy Scout found vials of World War II Chemical Agent Identification Sets in the area. The vials were used to train troops to recognize chemical agents. They contained diluted mustard and other chemical gases. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers found a total of 171 intact vials on the site and also removed incendiary bomblets and other metal debris.

Kansas

Almost a quarter million trees have been planted at Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge as part of The Conservation Fund's GoZero program. The new oak, hickory and pecan trees will restore forest habitat and address climate change by trapping more than 230,000 tons of carbon dioxide as the trees grow.

GoZero works with companies and individuals to reduce and then offset the carbon footprint of various activities. To help trap the carbon dioxide that results from such activities as flying or using electricity and gasoline, The Conservation Fund works with the Refuge System to identify protected natural areas where native trees can be planted. Delta Air Lines and U-Haul International both contributed funds for the 775-acre forest restoration at Marais des Cygnes Refuge.

New signs at the Crystal Dig Area explain what was found and what visitors should do if they find more vials. The final report by the Corps says “it is unlikely that munitions and explosives of concern or Chemical Agent Identification Sets remain at the project site.”

The crystal dig area has been a popular destination for school groups, scouts, tourists, birders and rock hounds for many years. About 30,000 visitors came to dig every year. The refuge is the only known site where these crystals are found. Because they form in wet soil just below the salt-encrusted surface, sand and clay particles are included in the crystal. These particles often form an hourglass shape within the crystal – a shape unique to crystals of Oklahoma’s Salt Plains. The selenite crystal was designated the State Crystal of Oklahoma in 2005.

Rhode Island

The Green Café invites visitors to share their inspirations about place and food at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Rhode Island. The Third Annual Poetry of the Wild Open Mic featured local poets and singers and “open mic surprises.”

The Green Café honors poetry month every year by providing a stage for local poets, writers and musicians inspired by nature. Because of the Café’s focus on local food, the connections between food and land were also celebrated this year. The Green Café is an artist and lecture series initiated by Ana Flores, artist in residence at the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island Kettle Pond Visitor Center.

The Café’s teen group Greenhouse sponsored their own Open Mic event performers ranging in age from 15 to 87. Seventeen-year-old Emma del Valle explains that the young members of Greenhouse are dedicated to using art to advocate environmental awareness and sustainability. The Open Mic event featured a monologue by a young woman who fell in love with a tree, a rap song about biology and original poetry about our relationship with nature. The teen group also sponsors The Granola Bar, a



café featuring participatory art events and nature walks. The youth group is funded by TogetherGreen (a Toyota/Audubon alliance), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Friends of the National Wildlife Refuges of Rhode Island.

Upper Mississippi River

Two national wildlife refuges along the Upper Mississippi River are being named Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. The designation includes just over 298,000 acres of federal and state lands and waters, including all of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (WI) and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge (WI).



Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (WI) and Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge (WI) are being named Ramsar Wetlands of International Importance. (USFWS)

“The ecological, social and economic values of the Upper Mississippi River make it one of the crown jewels of this nation’s wetlands,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. There are now 27 U.S. wetlands designated under the convention held in Ramsar, Iran in 1971.

Upper Mississippi River Refuge manager Don Hultman said the refuge and surrounding public lands support more than 200 nesting pairs of bald eagles, 120 species of fish, 42 species of mussels and migration habitat for up to 50 percent of the world’s population of canvasback ducks. Hultman says the designation has no effect on management responsibilities or any of the commercial or recreational uses of the river, adding that the designation can be valuable in connection with outreach efforts, research and future funding possibilities.

The Ramsar Convention aims to strengthen public awareness and appreciation of the role wetlands play in sustaining environmental health, economic enterprise and recreational well-being. The United States became a Party to the Convention in 1987. Formal listing of the new wetland on the international register is expected in 2010.

Build It and They Will Come

For Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge, located at the western Washington entry into the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the dream was a visitor center and an interpretive trail. Now, part of that dream has come true – 10 years after it was conceived.

The 1,049-acre Steigerwald Lake Refuge opened its 2.25-mile Gibbons Creek Wildlife Trail on June 14, after concentrated plantings since 2004

“The refuge is at a crossroads between the Cascade Mountains that run north and south, and the Columbia River Gorge that runs east and west,” said Refuge Manager Jim Clapp, who notes that the trail was first proposed in 1999 and is part of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The “Gateway to the Gorge” visitor center has never received funding, but no matter – more than 100 people, many of them from the neighboring towns of

the refuge’s recently formed Friends group, provided information on such topics as bats and habitat restoration.

Improving the Habitat

Habitat restoration is one notable success of the Refuge Stewards. Starting in 2004 with 2,300 shrubs donated by Georgia Pacific and Vancouver Audubon, the planting project was partially funded by a National Fish and Wildlife Fund grant. Board members of the Stewards recruited school groups, Scouts and others – about 200 volunteers in all – who put in some 3,000 hours to plant six acres.

One of the volunteers donated funds for a temporary watering system, used by the Stewards and volunteers to water four acres of the new plantings about three times in that first year, taking a full week to complete watering the site each time. The plantings had an 80 percent survival rate.

Another three acres west of the first planting – some adjacent to the riparian area and others near mature cottonwoods – were planted last year, with help from many repeat volunteers. This past winter, the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership was successful in obtaining another grant and another 5,000 cuttings were planted. The refuge maintenance crew, helped dig 900 holes with a tractor-driven auger in a year when snow and frozen ground lasted well into January.

“We think our Friends group – now about 50 members – will grow as the community discovers the refuge, thanks to the trail,” says Clapp, “and that we will serve more than Camas and Washougal once news of the trail spreads. We look forward to getting visitors from Vancouver – just 20 miles away.” 🦋



More than 200 volunteers, including school groups and Scouts, planted six acres of shrubs at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Washington. (Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership)

enhanced the habitat that is home to more than 200 bird species. The trailhead has an attractive entry gate, parking, restroom, informational kiosk, and, soon, interpretive artwork along the trail to illustrate its signature neotropical songbirds.

Camas and Washougal, attended the trail’s opening. After a welcome from the mayors of Camas and Washougal, there were comments from the funding agencies and a ribbon cutting (actually a willow branch). Along the trail, members of the Columbia Gorge Refuge Stewards,

Chief’s Corner - continued from page 2

membership of the Congressional Wildlife Refuge Caucus? Or, will we suddenly feel our refuge purpose is being compromised and we have no place for additional visitors?

Whatever outcome we desire, we should start planning now about how we will continue to engage visitors in a way that promotes the conservation values of every refuge and wetland

management district. The “secret” may well be secret no more.

Wings and Wetlands



"Oh Glorious Spring" by Doloris Pederson from Cheyenne Bottoms

About 200 birders from 23 states and Canada helped make this year's Wings and Wetlands Weekend in Great Bend, Kansas, one of the most successful ever. There were four rare bird sightings at Cheyenne Bottoms and Quivera National Wildlife Refuge – a golden crowned sparrow and a brand at Cheyenne Bottoms, a cerulean warbler and a black-throated blue warbler at Quivera Refuge. Of the 468 bird species known to Kansas, 311 have been observed at Quivera Refuge. Both areas are wetlands of international importance.

Great Bend Convention and Visitors Bureau President Chris Collier says evaluation surveys were mostly positive in spite of cold wet weather throughout the weekend. "The success of this event highlights the opportunities available for nature-based visitors to our region and state," says Collier. "It's also an indicator to local businesses and organizations of the potential within this market." Collier says most visitors spent at least four days in the region. She said one visitor

reported spending \$1,500 at a single campground.

One visitor from Montana commented, "I was very impressed with the quality and concern for the environment and the birding knowledge of the people from Kansas we met." Collier says birders are also heritage tourists which means they tend to stay longer, "exploring and immersing themselves into the community as a way to heighten their experience."

The festival also featured the Third Wings and Wetlands Invitational Art Exhibit, including paintings by Doloris Pederson. Pederson grew up in Kansas but became interested in wetlands as a painter in Carmel, California, where she painted at a bird sanctuary and a salt marsh. Now she has moved back to Kansas, where she calls Cheyenne Bottoms an "endless course of inspiration."

"I want to be a voice for the wetlands in some way," says Pederson, who enjoys

painting the changing light from morning to evening as it is reflected on the water. "What an incredible opportunity it is to paint not only landscape and the reflection of the atmosphere on the water, but also to paint the birds and the spirit of the birds. It is incredible freedom that they have, combined with the unity that they possess in flight and when they mingle with one another." 

 "Quivira is situated within the transition zone of the vast Great Plains, where the lush tallgrass prairie to the east merges with the arid shortgrass prairie to the west...The environmental centerpiece of Quivira Refuge is its wetland habitat, notably the 1,500 acre Big Salt Marsh and 900-acre Little Salt Marsh."

Russell D. Butcher; America's National Wildlife Refuges: A Complete Guide, Second Edition, 2008



Doloris Pederson paints wetlands at Cheyenne Bottoms near Quivera National Wildlife Refuge in Kansas.



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A Look Back ... Victor Scheffer

*“Long-lost Deer Found on West Coast
by Service Naturalist”*

This headline on a 1941 press release from the U.S. Department of the Interior identified Victor B. Scheffer as the naturalist who discovered a band of about 600 Columbia white-tailed deer along the Washington-Oregon border. Lewis and Clark had described these deer, whose tails and antlers differ from other whitetails and whose habitat was largely destroyed by farmers and hunters.

By the early 1900s, scientists believed the deer were extinct. But Scheffer had heard local residents describe herds of what they called cottontails. Refuge System Budget Director Larry Williams wrote in *Quality Whitetails* magazine that Scheffer mounted four trips to the lower Columbia River to gather evidence which ultimately included 23 skulls, 4 skins and an assortment of antlers. It took another 32 years for Congress to create the Julia Butler Hansen Refuge for the Columbian White-tailed Deer but the deer was first listed as endangered in 1967, six years before Congress enacted the Endangered Species Act.

Scheffer was born in Kansas in 1906 but grew up in Washington, where his father was a biologist for the U.S. Bureau of

Biological Survey (the predecessor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) for 27 years. The younger Scheffer would hold the same position for 29 years. Then he went on to teach at his alma mater, the University of Washington, write 13 books and more than a hundred scientific articles and serve on a variety of scientific boards.

Scheffer’s book *The Year of the Whale*, won the John Burroughs Medal as the best natural history book of 1969. His 1974 work calling for a new wilderness ethic, *A Voice for Wildlife*, received the Humane Society’s highest honor – the Joseph Wood Krutch Medal. He chaired the Marine Mammal Commission until his seventieth birthday.

Scheffer also wrote lighthearted, informative scripts for the public radio program *BirdNote*, expressing his belief that “sentiment or emotion is a necessary and healthy part of decision-making, along with science, exploration and discovery, in the management of our natural resources.” He did not retire from *BirdNote* until last year, when he was 102. “Exercising my sense of wonder



Victor Scheffer in 2002 (Ron Reeder)

about the world,” Scheffer had said, “has had a healthy effect on my immune system.”

Send Us Your Comments

Send your ideas for news stories or other suggestions for Refuge Update to
RefugeUpdate@fws.gov or mailed to *Refuge Update*, USFWS-NWRS,
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