

Southwest Region



A Inaugural *ceremony* Awards

2015

Welcome to the
Southwest Region Inaugural Awards Ceremony
2015

My fellow Southwest Region Fish and Wildlife employees,

I am pleased to welcome you to the inaugural Southwest Region Awards ceremony. This ceremony and the awards being presented are a fitting tribute to the dedication and hard work you put forth each and every day to accomplish our conservation mission.

Now it is time to be formally recognized for your untiring efforts and impressive diligence in ensuring each critical piece of the conservation process functions at the highest level possible.

Thank you for making the Southwest Region a place where the best and brightest employees are not only on the job every day, but are truly acknowledged for their outstanding work. You do it with pride; you do it without fanfare; and most importantly, you do it because it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Benjamin N. Tuggle, Ph.D.
Regional Director

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This Inaugural Regional Awards Program would not be possible without the support of the Regional Directorate Team.

The members of the RDT are:

Benjamin Tuggle, Ph.D.	Regional Director
Joy Nicholopoulos	Deputy Regional Director
Aaron Archibeque	Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
Beth Britt	Assistant Regional Director, External Affairs
Nicholas Chavez	Special Agent in Charge, Office of Law Enforcement
Stewart Jacks	Assistant Regional Director, Fish and Aquatic Conservation
David Mendias	Assistant Regional Director, Budget and Administration
Dana Roth	Assistant Regional Director, Science Applications
Michelle Shaughnessy	Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services
Greg Hughes	Chief, Division of Migratory Birds
Cliff Schleusner	Chief, Division of Wildlife and Sports Fish Restoration Program

The other team that made this, the Inaugural Regional Awards Program, possible is the Awards Committee.

The members of the Awards Committee are:

Annessa Culbreth
Melanie Dabovich
Ken Garrahan
Lesli Gray
Nicole Haskett
Vanessa Martinez
Steve McEvoy
Anna Vargas
Barry Wilson

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In this Region, we take “Safety First” not only as a slogan, but also as a practice. The initial award of the Southwest Regional Awards Program is the Excellence in Safety Award.

Quarterly and Annual Excellence in Safety Award recipients for fiscal year 2015.

Q1 October – December 2014:	Inks Dam National Fish Hatchery
Q2 January – March 2015:	Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge
Q3 April – June 2015:	Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Q4 July – September 2015:	Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge
2015 Annual Award:	Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

The following award has previously been awarded, and is significant enough to be mentioned at this venue:

John R. Morgart Award for Scientific Publication: To recognize scientific accomplishments in the form of peer reviewed publications by an individual or a team. Categories include: Notable Scientific Paper published with an R2 employee as an author, a Lifetime Scientific Publication Achievement Award, Student Scientific Publication Award (for SCEP, STEP, or volunteer employees), and an award for Historically Significant Scientific Publications. This award encourages and recognizes excellence in scientific publication in achieving the U.S. Fish and Wildlife mission.

Specifically, this award is being presented for “Whooping Crane demographic responses to winter drought focus conservation strategies.” *Biological Conservation*

Recipients: Matthew Butler, Kris Metzger, and Grant Harris

Early Career Conservationist of the Year (Awarded to SCA, Interns, Pathways, Directorate Fellows):

This award will be presented to a current or recently graduated student within the award year who has demonstrated passion for conservation, a high level of achievement in their studies and a high degree of dedication and accomplishment in their work for the Service. The work may be in the biological, public use or resource management arena, and may take place within Ecological Services, Refuges, Migratory Birds, WSFR, Fisheries, or Science Applications.

Recipient: Daniel Gallegos

Nominees:

Jessica Jia
Jessica K. Blackband
Courtney Sue Anderson
Emily Zurcich
Brian Charles Fuller
Mariah B. Oeser

Early Career Professional of the Year (Awarded to a full time or term employee, with less than 5 years of experience with the Service and no more than 5 years since graduation): This award will be presented to a current Service employee who has demonstrated a commitment and passion for the work of the Service regardless of program. The employee’s achievements further the mission of the Service and have a tangible impact on the employee’s program on a one time or ongoing basis.

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Recipient: Clay Nichols

Nominees:

Megan Goyette
Carlos Romeo Garcia
William Tintor

Excellence in Communication/Outreach/Environmental Education: An individual or team that focused their efforts on reaching external partners, internal employees, a volunteer group, or an organization by involving them in one of the following; Service specific conservation project, using educational tools, social media, or other available technology requiring interaction and commitment for a positive outcome, thereby developing a strong relationship between the Service and the community.

Recipient: Jennifer Owen-White

Nominees:

Houston Urban Initiative
Julie McIntyre
Jeff Humphrey
Angela Palacios James

Field Employee of the Year: An outstanding member of a field office who has displayed vision and innovation in the field of conservation. This individual has initiated change in the way work is done on the ground and has gone above and beyond for our important trust resources.

Recipient: Joel Lusk

Nominees:

Douglas M. Head II
Michelle Christman
James Davenport
Dustin Paul Taylor
Daniel T. McDonald
George Dennis
Carrie Marr

Innovator of the Year: To recognize an innovative individual or team who has creatively resolved an issue in either their program, the region, or the Service that has changed the way business is done, with an impact larger than themselves.

Recipient: Dick Lanford

Nominees:

Grant Harris
Steven Edward Sesnie
Lower Rio Grande Valley NWR Water Team
Nathan Allan

Partnership of the Year (With External Partners): An FWS employee who has developed or worked in an innovative partnership between the Fish and Wildlife Service and either a sister agency, Native American

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Tribe, or other external partner which has led to the preservation of an important trust resource by initiating change and cutting-edge ways of working together. This partnership has exceeded expectations in conservation.

Recipient: Karin Eldridge

Nominees:

William Bartush
Rio Hondo Restoration Project (Bitter Lake NWR)
Andrew Hautzinger
Lacrecia Johnson
George Dennis and Rebecca Neri-Zagal

Program Support Professional of the Year: To recognize an individual that provides exceptional support for an individual or program. This person could provide financial, human resources, information technology, general administration, or contracting knowledge to processes in their program.

Recipient: Alice Montoya

Nominees:

Cathy Needleman
Renee Garcia
Leslie Medina
Annette Perez
Daniel Garcia
Magdalena Etemadi-Naghani
Mary Anderson
William Rager
Christina Nicole Martinez
Aaron Aragon
Cheryl Rodriguez
Timothy Uding

Southwest Region Scientific Excellence Award: To recognize an individual or a team who has addressed a natural resources management challenge, through the application of science. The individual or team made a significant contribution to conservation utilizing science and/or tacit knowledge.

Recipient: Southwest Region Inventory and Monitoring Team

*Matthew Butler
Bill Johnson
Sarah Lehnen
Kris Metzger
Jena Moon
Jim Mueller
Steve Sesnie
Mitch Sternberg
Brenda Zaun
Lacrecia Johnson
Paige Schmidt*

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Cynthia Eichhorn

Nominees:

San Juan River Recovery Implementation Program Office
Tom Brandt
Matthew Butler

Supervisor of the Year: An individual who has shown superior leadership skills in managing their team. Someone who has supported the mission of the Service through their ability to lead, and has helped the Southwest Region accomplish its goals through their efforts.

Recipient: Matthew Gomez

Nominees:

Kelly McDowell
Kathy Whaley
Daniel Garcia
David Lee Campbell
Sheryl Barrett
Scott Richardson
Reymundo Aragon
Thomas J. Karabanoff
Mark Olson

Team of the Year (Internal Team): A group who has demonstrated an outstanding ability to work together to accomplish their goals. This award will be given to a team who has accomplished something that was challenging or unique through collaboration.

Recipient: Middle Rio Grande Urban Conservation Corps

Monica Kimbrough
Ken Garrahan

Nominees:

Staff of Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge
Fish and Aquatic Conservation Team
National Wildlife Refuge Division of Budget
Division of Realty
Austin ESFO "PFW Program Team"
Texas City Y Oil Spill response team
Debbie Moralez, Karen Welsh, Teresa Martinez
WSFR Staff
Mora National Fish Hatchery
Service's Grand Canyon Humpback Chub Team

Wage-Grade Employee of the Year: This award will be presented to a WG series employee whose career and work has shown commitment to the conservation of our natural resources and that demonstrates innovation, personal dedication and superior use of job talents.

Recipient: David Root

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Nominees:

Rick Carroll
Calvin Reaves
Coby Bartram
Leslie Wayne Walker

“One Service” Award: Individual or team candidates who consistently embody a "One Service" cross-programmatic approach to their work in fulfillment of the Service's overall mission of “working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

Recipient: Human Resources Office

*Duane Padilla
Anna Vargas
June Griego
Aaron Aragon
Cheryl Irvin
Tony Long
Nicole Martinez
Christina Smith
Vince Andrews
Alexandria Bivens
Tamara Manes
Monica Salazar
Cindy Laws
Jason Lujan
Veronica Soto
Lisa Hamlin
Kelly Doonan
Wesley Thomas
Obie Nwagbologu
Anne Hammond*

Nominees:

Jose Viramontes
Great Plains Emphasis Area Team
Monica Kimbrough
Paul L. Tashjian
Aaron Archibeque

This concludes the presentation of the awards. Congratulations to the recipients and to all that were nominated. You have demonstrated your commitment to go above and beyond what is expected to accomplish the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Thank you.