*Chief's corner.doc*

## History on the Land

In Arizona, Big Eye Cabin is just one of several historic buildings that Kofa National Wildlife Refuge has stabilized, restored and opened to the public – reminders of a time when mining was a major force in the state's economy and lifestyle.

Along the Virginia-North Carolina border, Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge has long been identified as an important thoroughfare in the Underground Railroad to Freedom. Just a year ago, an archaeologist uncovered evidence of largely self-sufficient settlements established between the colonial era and the Civil War by fugitive slaves known as "maroons".

Thousands of settlers in wagon trains traveling westward along the Oregon and Mormon trails stopped for rest and water at the Green River on what became Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge in Wyoming.

In North Dakota, Lake Ilo National Wildlife Refuge is managed to promote waterfowl nesting and brood rearing. But in the 1980s, when water in the lake was lowered, refuge staff was amazed to discover a tepee ring on the floor. The discovery turned out to be the first of 58,000 stone artifacts recovered from the lake bed, some of them rare Folsom spear tips belonging to Paleoindians 10,500 years ago.

Widely known as a leader in preserving the nation's wildlife and natural wonders, the Refuge System is less renowned for its protection of archaeological and historic sites. It shouldn't be.

There are more than 2,060 historic structures on refuge lands – with 89 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. We have about 16,000 archaeological sites and nearly 2,200 museum collections.

The cultural legacies that people left behind – their footprints on the landscape – give fascinating insights into our past. The connection between our historic roots and our natural resource roots is unbreakable. So, even as we battle some cultural resource looting – as told in a story on page 5 of this *Refuge Update* – we remember that in protecting the land, we conserve the tales and dreams of our ancestors. What fine stories we have to tell.