



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

December 2010

Mentoring the Next Generation



Editor's Note:

Connecting with nature does not look the same for everyone. Connecting with nature means different things to different people. For some, it's hunting and fishing. For others, it's walking in the woods or on the beach. What does your nature encounter look like? We want to know. To that end, we have added a regular section called Let's Go Outside!

We invite you to submit personal nature encounters as experienced by you and your children, as well as innovative ideas on how to connect with nature. We will run your accounts in this feature segment.

Please submit your youngsters' stories and photos to our regular section: Kid's Corner. Kid's Corner features the nature writing and photographic pieces by the children of regional employees.

E-mail: valerie_redmond@fws.gov with your Let's Go Outside! and Kids Corner articles, photos, journal entries and poems.

On the Cover:

RD Tom Melius and a young hunter. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

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Mentoring the Next Generation

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's conservation efforts have been nothing less than commendable over the decades. The Service's programs resonate with success after success due to the hard work and efforts of the dedicated employees that make it all happen. The spectrum of accomplishments runs the gamut from successful land acquisitions to impressive refuge deer hunts for the disabled. The Service has recovered endangered species and led expeditious and effective oil spill responses, both nationally and regionally. The list of accomplishments is long and impressive.

It is and has been a job well done, but it is a job that must reach into the future through the minds and hearts of the next generation. This will be a challenge for us, as more than half the workforce of government agencies will soon be eligible to retire, taking their valuable expertise and skills with them. A conservation vision for the future of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must include among other things, an effective strategy for the transfer of the wealth of knowledge and experience that is so rich in this agency. Shifting demographics in the nation

dictate nothing less. Moving this agency forward requires the intentional enhancement of our workforce through comprehensive career development. Effective mentorship programming is one means to this end.

The mission of the Service is to work with others to conserve,



Above: Mentors Greg Hoch and Tom Melius, Kyle Godette, Paul Virnig, 'Boomer', Zack Godette and Mitch Virnig after a great morning at Hamden Slough NWR. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. This is both our motive and our clear rationale. In addition to the extensive knowledge transfer that is so key for the Service, successful mentorship programs deliver strategic benefits that are crucial to making us thrive as an agency. Effective mentoring programs groom successive leaders, acclimate new employees to the agency's culture, facilitate practical experience, and enhance recruitment and retention goals.

The return on investment to the Service is immeasurable. As well, it is the law. In 2004, the president signed the Federal Workforce Flexibility Act of 2004, Public Law 108-411, which requires agencies to provide training to managers on mentoring employees.

Successful mentoring programs make good business sense, as they are inextricably tied to our conservation mission. I encourage you to get involved by volunteering in the broad spectrum that mentorship programs offer. There's an array of opportunities. You can help a young person experience the outdoors in a meaningful way. You can nominate an employee for a leadership program. You can help an employee find a

comfort zone in the agency, help develop a career plan, help direct his or her potential or offer your guidance in some other way. You can encourage and develop and employee's education or you can simply be a friend. I encourage you to read about the mentoring strides already being made in the region in this month's issue.

Warm regards,

--Tom Melius
Midwest Regional Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In Their Own Words: Thoughts on Mentorship

Mentorship can really make a big difference. Wildlife Biologist Jeramie Strickland shares his thoughts on the subject below.

Working as a wildlife biologist intern with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge has allowed me to participate in multi-level reciprocal mentoring.

Additionally, I was able to work with Service mentors to help restore, enhance, and protect important habitats for wildlife, including several threatened and endangered species that call our refuge home. Currently, I am working with the Service to help seal some of the leaks in the diversity pipelines. I have been fortunate to be a part of

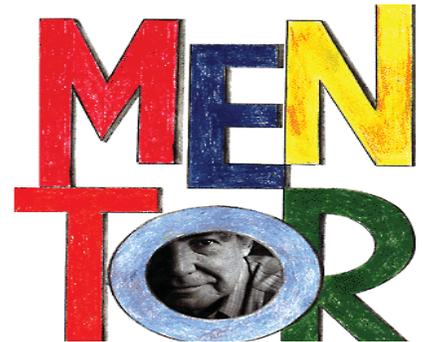
collaborative grants and projects to help expose underrepresented students to field biology through reciprocal mentoring opportunities with the goal of encouraging these students to pursue wildlife biology and related degrees and careers with the Service.

Thanks to my personal, academic, and professional mentors, whom all have helped me get my foot-in-the-door with the Service, I have found a place I can call home – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. I hope to be able to look back 30+ years from now, and still be employed with the Service or working closely with it and partnering organizations.

My mentors have been influential by providing knowledge, motivation, advice and counseling, and encouragement, which has

helped me mature and advance in my profession and career. Knowing that so many Service leaders will be retiring within the next decade, it is essential that we continue to serve the refuge system and help the Service further carry out its valuable mission.

-- Jeramie T. Strickland
Upper Mississippi River
National Wildlife & Fish Refuge



Above far left: Jeramie Strickland teaching about turtles. USFWS photo.

In Their Own Words: Thoughts on Mentorship

In Their Own Words



To hear them in their own words, visit the sites below:

Midwest Regional Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Melius on Mentoring:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/Tom%20video1.flv>

Ducks Unlimited Hunt Coordinator, Jim Demgen:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/Ducks%20Unlimited%20Hunt%20Coordinator.flv>

“I would encourage all of our staff to volunteer and be a part of being able to give back a little bit to the young people today who have so many other people pulling on their time.” --Tom Melius



Above: Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius with a bird call. USFWS photo.

Mentoring in the Midwest

Young conservationists are connecting with nature year-round through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored hunts, fishing days and science camps across the Midwest. As a major Service initiative, Connecting Children with Nature, provides children and their families opportunities to get out into nature and get their feet wet.

Whether it be learning how to fish for trout, hunt waterfowl or learn how to use a dichotomous key, young visitors to USFWS national wildlife refuges, wetland management districts, waterfowl production areas and fish hatcheries are exploring their natural world with guides and mentors from around the region.



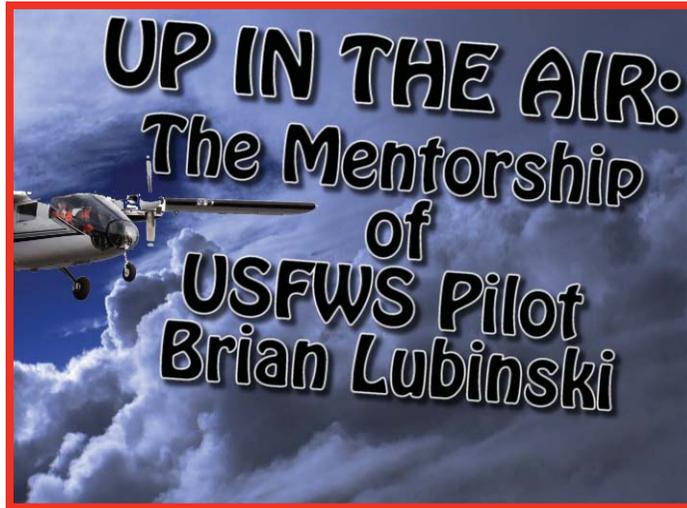
Ducks Unlimited Hunt Coordinator, Jim Demgen. USFWS photo.

Up in the Air: The Mentorship of USFWS Pilot Brian Lubinski

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest Pilot, Brian Lubinski, realized his life long dream through the help of a string of important mentors. The impetus for his aviation passion was an airplane full of snakes that he encountered as a 12-year-old boy on Lake Vermillion in northern Minnesota. A Minnesota DNR floatplane docked right in front of him at a Frazer Bay boat dock. The conservation officers flying the single engine floatplane had been cleaning up remote campsites and the bags of garbage they placed in the plane had become temporary homes for the reptiles! The Minneapolis native says he has loved snakes all of his life. “Between the airplane and the snakes, I was in, and the aviation seed was planted,” he says.

Later in life he attended Bemidji State University where he met his first mentor, Mary, who later became his wife. She encouraged him to pursue his dream and backed up her encouragement with enough money to pay for his first flight lesson.

That first flight lesson in the summer of 1983 happened to also be the first time he stepped foot in an airplane of any size. The instructor told him to get into the left seat. “I thought, alright, I guess you operate these things from the right side, cause I’m not going to fly this thing,” he remembers thinking. Lubinski says they taxied a bit, and then the instructor told him to grab the yoke and put the power forward before take off. “I’m kind of



thinking now wait a minute this seems kind of dangerous. I’m on the runway here.” The instructor talked him through his first take off. Lubinski says that first flight sealed the deal and put wings on a life-long dream.

It was his second mentor, Chief Pilot for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Val Judkins (now deceased) who Lubinski said really encouraged him along the way. “I miss him. Great guy”, he says.

While aviation is an exhilarating high and important tool in natural resource conservation, it is not without its hazards. Lubinski tells of two harrowing experiences as an aircrew member that nearly ended his aviation career. Both in Alaska, the first was attributed to human error. The pilot that Lubinski was flying with, erroneously ran the plan out of fuel, yet skillfully landed the quiet airplane on the banks of the raging Yukon River. The second was attributed to a natural occurrence. “The wind made a sudden and unpredictable shift and blew the Beaufort Sea fog inland, catching us between the fog bank and the Brooks

range,” Lubinski says. “We weren’t able to land due to the rugged mountainous terrain and dense fog so the pilot lifted the plane into the fog, spiraling clear of the mountains before pointing the aircraft north and safely landing in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. Both the pilot and I knew that few survive that kind of experience.”

After the second incident, Lubinski says he kissed the ground and said, “I’ll never fly again”. Seven years later, USFWS’s regional wildlife biologist-pilot, Bob Foster volunteered to mentor him. Lubinski took him up on his invitation and started flying again.

“There are few words that can describe my appreciation for all those who have invested in my aviation career over the past 27 years”, Lubinski says. “Bill Hartwig, Charlie Wooley, Nita Fuller, John Christian, Gerry Jackson, and the list goes on. However, when push came to shove, it was Bob Foster who believed in me enough to drop the keys of the regional airplane into my hands on May 10, 2000, saying, ‘the airplane’s yours, but if you bend it, we both lose our careers’. I still smile when I think of that moment, “ he says. It seems that Lubinski has found his calling, along with the birds...up in the air.

--Valerie Rose Redmond and
Brian Lubinski

Up in the Air: The Mentorship of USFWS Pilot Brian Lubinski

In His Own Words



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pilot Brian Lubinski credits:
**Charlie Wooley, John Christian,
Gerry Jackson, and his wife
among other mentors for his
aviation career.**

To hear him in his own words,
visit the sites below:

Abridged Mentorship Interview:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/mentor%20b1.flv>

Full Interview:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/Brian%20Lubinski%20Full%20Interview.flv>



USFWS Midwest pilot, Brian Lubinski. USFWS photo.

I have enjoyed such an awesome career over the past 20 years. At the top of the list would be the privilege I have had participating on teams advancing conservation on the ground. I am particularly excited about how we have successfully incorporated state of the art technologies in improving the safe, efficient, effective and economical use of aircraft in advancing conservation on the ground. Examples include real time tracking combined with background layers relevant to the mission being flown. This eliminated the need for maps in the airplane and reduced the number of air sick air crew members, not to mention reduced flight time and increased safety! We incorporated automated flight following equipment and a satellite phone that allows us to comply with Departmental requirements everywhere we fly. The latest and potentially the largest positive impact to effectively using aircraft to accomplish the Service mission is the transition to a medium format digital camera system; the benefits are huge and are just now being explored; aerial surveys of nesting snow geese in the Arctic, Tundra swans in the Upper Mississippi Refuge, island nesting birds in the Great Lakes, wetland easement surveys and wildlife habitat mapping have all benefited from this technology.

*-- Brian Lubinski
USFWS Midwest Region Pilot*



Around the Region: Hamden Slough Youth Hunt

Young hunters, mentors and parents came out for a morning of duck hunting at Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge.

Staff and Friends of Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District, along with volunteers from Ducks Unlimited, hosted the youth and their families for a morning of hands-on waterfowling. Midwest Regional Director, Tom Melius, was among the dedicated mentors who shared their passion for waterfowling and conservation. This is the second annual youth hunt that Hamden Slough NWR has hosted and is a unique and very special day for mentors and hunters alike.



USFWS photos by Tina Shaw.

In Their Own Words: Thoughts on Mentorship

In Their Own Words



To hear them in their own words, visit the sites below:

Lionel Grant from Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge believes in giving respect to people when it's due. He says he would not be where he is had it not been for Dr. Dexter Wakefield, an associate professor at Southern University Carbondale:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/Tom%20video1.flv>

Mary Stephanski from Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Winona District) credits Don Hultman for her mentorship:

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/InsideR3/Videos/mentor%20m1.flv>

Lionel Grant from Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS photo.



Right: Mary Stephanski from Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Winona District). USFWS photo.



Mentoring Future Waterfowlers for More than Thirty Years

The Young Waterfowlers Program is coordinated in partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota Waterfowl Association and has a legacy spanning more than 30 years. In its first year, five young waterfowl enthusiasts became graduates of the program, and in 2010 that number has more than tripled.

This year, 17 children and young adults between the ages of 12 and 15 joined seasoned members of the waterfowl hunting community, including waterfowl biologists, and members of the Minnesota Duck and Goose Callers Association and Minnesota Waterfowl Association to learn- and put into practice - lessons in waterfowl ecology and management, wetland plant and animal identification, waterfowl hunting safety and ethics, decoying and calling, and shotgun care and ballistics.

“Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Wetland Management District is proud to have hosted this program now for more than 20 years. Not only do the kids learn about important conservation, but the parents do also,” said Mike Malling, FWS biologist and Minnesota Valley NWR liaison for the program.

The program consists of 10 hours of classroom sessions, a field day at the Minneapolis Gun Club, and a mentored youth hunt on Minnesota Valley NWR during Minnesota’s Youth Waterfowl Day. All students complete a firearms safety course prior to participating. Participants



Above: Participants after a successful hunt during the Minnesota Youth Waterfowl Day. USFWS photo.

have the opportunity to hunt on a designated area of the refuge during the regular Minnesota waterfowl season for the year they completed the course. The area is only open to kids completing the program.

“In a world where video games and other technologies are so attractive to children, having the ideal location to hunt waterfowl is very special,” said Tim Mitchell, father of one of this year’s graduating class. “Add to that all the information and expertise in waterfowl identification, habitat, and shooting basics of the presenters and mentors - it is a unique program. The experience is one of a kind that I would not have been able to provide for my son. The smiles in the photos are priceless.”

This year, kids participating in the program harvested 51 ducks representing seven species (mallard, wood duck, green-winged teal, blue-winged teal, American wigeon, northern shoveler, and northern pintail) on the Youth Waterfowl Day. They also harvested 11 Canada geese. Dave Fronczak is one of the many Fish and Wildlife Service employees who serves as a mentor for the program. “I did not have this program when I started hunting. So, I am happy to be able to participate and pass on some knowledge of waterfowl biology and ethical hunting practices to enthusiastic hunters,” he said. “I like to see the faces of the kids when the hunt all comes together. Because no matter what happens, they had a good time.”

Mentoring Future Waterfowlers for More than Thirty Years

The program received a \$4,000 FWS Challenge Cost Share Grant last year, which allowed for the purchase of a computer shooting simulation program and additional outdoor hunting gear for use by program participants. "Many kids don't have access to the proper hunting equipment to make their hunt enjoyable. The Challenge Cost Share Grant allowed us to purchase quality gear for the kids to borrow during the hunting season," stated Malling.

Jim Meier, father of another 2010 participant said, "As a 30+

I did not have this program when I started hunting. I am happy to be able to participate and pass on some knowledge of waterfowl biology and ethical hunting practices to enthusiastic hunters. I like to see the faces of the kids when the hunt all comes together. Because no matter what happens, they had a good time.

--Dave Fronczak

year waterfowl hunter I can say with some degree of experience that I think your program was outstanding. I found myself learning something during every

session and I thank you all for that. My son Jake also learned quite a bit about waterfowl, habitat, safety, ethics, calling, and general hunting. He has even decided to dedicate this hunting season to waterfowl only."

"With programs such as this one and the Junior Duck Stamp Program, we are proud to have played a role in mentoring our conservation leaders of tomorrow," Malling said. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota

Waterfowl Association have worked together in partnership for more than thirty years to protect and conserve waterfowl habitat in Minnesota. MWA is a leader in the preservation, protection and enhancement of Minnesota's wetlands, related waterfowl habitat and our hunting heritage. The Service is proud to coordinate this educational initiative for future waterfowl hunters and conservationists. For more information about the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, visit www.mnwaterfowl.com.

--Ashley Spratt & Tom Cooper



Below: Participants in the 2010 Young Waterfowlers Program held at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS photo.

First Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership Project funded by GLRI in Iron County, Wisconsin



Left: The new free span bridge was built by the Iron County Forestry Department. This view is looking downstream at approximately the same location as the photo above. STEP employee Tyler Martin is as happy as the fish. Right: Norman Creek Culvert that was replaced. View is looking downstream, into the culvert entrance. USFWS photos.

This culvert on Norman Creek, Iron County, Wis., often washed out during heavy rains and because it was undersized, created a velocity barrier that reduced fish passage. It was replaced with a free-span bridge in the fall of 2010 by Iron County Forestry, and Land and Water Conservation Departments. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bad River Watershed Association are cooperating to monitor fish movement and habitat changes.

“The Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department is grateful for the Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership which funded this fish passage project on Norman Creek in Iron County,” said Mary Jo Gingras, County Conservationist for the Iron County Land and Water Conservation Department. “Even more so, we appreciate

and credit our natural resource partners including the Bad River Watershed Association, Iron County Forestry Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute and others who assist in these collaborative projects that implement real conservation on the ground and in the water, to improve fish and wildlife habitat and protect soil and water resources in Iron County.”

Sites like these that pose a problem for fish and their habitats are not uncommon in the Bad River watershed. The Bad River Watershed Association, with strong support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and County Land and Water Conservation Departments, has led a culvert inventory and restoration program since 2005.

“We knew of many culverts in the watershed that were preventing fish from moving upstream,” says BRWA Executive Director Michele Wheeler. “And we know that when fish can’t get to important spawning and rearing habitats, populations suffer.”

With the help of natural resource agencies, townships and local citizens, BRWA created a list of top priority sites. “We want to make sure that we’re spending funds on sites that will have a significant benefit for fish. If sites are also a problem for towns and counties because they washout regularly,

Continued on next page.

Beyond Awareness: A Best Practices Workbook

About two years ago, all refuge field stations received a copy of *Best Practices Workbook for Hunting and Shooting Recruitment and Retention*.

The workbook takes information from human dimensions research, coupled with insight from a “think tank” of experts, to identify the elements that make effective recruitment and retention programs. While the workbook is focused on hunting, the lessons learned can be applied to other activities (fishing, birding, etc.).



In the first chapter, the workbook identifies eight stages of hunting and shooting participation and emphasizes the importance of the social environment as well as technical skills. Many of our outreach and programs focus on the early stages of this model: awareness, interest, and trial stages. It may be time to look at your program, work with your partners, and see if there

are opportunities to expand into subsequent stages that are often needed for people to actually adopt an activity long term.

Specific chapters of interest include Best Practices for Expanding Your Reach: Diverse Audiences (Chapter 6), Expanding Your Reach: Persons with Disabilities (Chapter 7), Mentoring (Chapter 10), and Special Events/Hunts (Chapter 18).

If you are considering developing a program or need new ideas to freshen up your existing program, you may want to find your copy, dust it off, and take a look.

Can't find your copy? The entire workbook is available at: www.nssf.org/

bestpractices/toolkit.cfm and on the Region 3 Visitor Services sharepoint site:

<http://sharepoint.fws.net/regions/r3/r3vs/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

--Maggie O'Donnell
Chief Branch of Visitor Services

GLRI Continued from Page 12

then it makes even more sense to work there.”

This was the case at Norman Creek. The new bridge opened 3.5 miles of habitat for brook trout and will significantly reduce sediment inputs downstream.

BRWA and the Service are also working to determine how the project will affect the stream channel.

“Monitoring after culvert replacements is essential,” says Wheeler. “Landowners, county and town crews and partners can see how their stream changes over time. Most importantly, we can use the data to improve our future culvert work.”

The Land and Water Conservation Department has worked closely with townships and Forestry Department in Iron County for the past 8 years on improving water quality through reducing erosion and sedimentation and re-stabilizing crossings on roads and trails. Norman Creek was the first of 8 projects that received funding through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to be funded through 2011 in Iron County.

--Ashley Spratt and Pam Dryer
External Affairs, Ashland
FWCO Fish and Wildlife
Conservation Office

Give THANKS for your Wild Places! Purchase a Duck Stamp Today!

The refuges indicated on the map
sell duck stamps.



For additional locations visit: www.duckstamp.com.

Wildlife Crimes Don't Pay: Iowa Guide Sentenced to Prison for Wildlife, Fraud and Tax Violations

Federal and state conservation agencies successfully partnered to preserve legal hunting opportunities for future generations in Iowa by putting an end to an illegal white-tailed deer and turkey guiding business in Ringgold County through the sentencing of Mt. Ayr man on October 21.

A multi-year investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, United States Postal Inspection Service and the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division ended last week as James Joseph Juergens, 50, of Mt. Ayr, Iowa, was sentenced to 21 months of imprisonment for charges of violating U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service laws and mail fraud and twelve months of imprisonment for failure to file tax returns associated with his operation of a hunting guide business known as Lott's Creek Inn located in Ringgold County, Iowa.

On December 30, 2005, a search warrant was served at Lott's Creek Inn, Juergens' hunting lodge. The warrant was obtained and served by the IDNR with assistance from the Service. Evidence seized during the investigation indicated that Juergens' illegal guide operation

was expansive and documented more than 140 clients, many of whom were repeat clients, from up and down the eastern sea board. By reviewing seized documents, including photographs, address books, client lists and other financial documents, including returned checks, payment receipts,



Above: White tailed deer buck. Photo courtesy of Macomb Paynes.

banking documents, client/guide contracts, IDNR and Service agents were able to build a case that the U.S. Attorney's Office elevated to involve both the U.S. Postal Service and the IRS for additional mail and tax fraud violations.

Pat Lund, resident agent in charge for Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, noted that, the Service is committed to preserving hunting and hunting opportunities for future generations, saying that "Our mission as a conservation agency is to put a stop to illegal and unethical wildlife activities and we are pleased to partner with the

IDNR, the U.S. Attorney's Office and our fellow federal agencies to bring this case to a close."

Paying between \$1,500 to \$2,500 per person for the opportunity to participate in the illegal take of trophy buck deer and turkey, clients hunted without proper non-resident licenses, with illegal firearms and were instructed by Juergens to hunt in closed areas. Juergens' illegal hunting activities have a direct impact on the managed deer population and skew the population numbers that conservation managers use to determine the health of a population relative to hunting and the planned state hunting lottery.

There is an economic cost to Juergens' operation as well. It is estimated that Juergens made more than \$100,000 annually through his illegal guide service and that he failed to report such income to the Internal Revenue Service for more than four years. Aside from, the federal fraud, Juergens' illegal hunting activities resulted in the state of Iowa losing out on almost \$800 per illegal hunter through non-resident licenses. Aside from the biological and economic impacts of Juergens' activities, there is a social cost too, with local hunters losing out on legal hunting opportunities in their community.

--Tina Shaw
External Affairs

A New Experience for a Seasoned Grouse Hunter: Mentor

It is a Saturday evening in mid-October when one of my regular hunting buddies, Jonas, calls to finalize our game plan for the next day's grouse and woodcock hunt in Pine County, Minn. After a brief conversation about which of our usual "honey holes" we'll target, we commiserate for a while about the driving rain that is in the forecast. Having just had a fairly productive afternoon hunting grouse in some drizzle with Ole, my German shorthaired pointer, the following day's anticipated weather doesn't have me too deterred. As someone who has hunted ruffed grouse – North America's finest upland game bird (that's right pheasant hunters, I said it!) – since he was old enough to carry a gun, I have years of anecdotal data that lead me to believe that a light rain can enhance success when hunting birds with a dog. The added moisture helps scents hold stronger to the foliage and other substrate on the forest floor than they would in drier conditions. That said, a driving rain is a different animal altogether. Under these conditions scents are generally washed away quickly, making it much harder on the dog's sniffer to zero in on the intended quarry. Also, to state the obvious, these conditions generally make for a far less comfortable day in the field regardless of the quality of your rain gear.

With these considerations in mind, I am a bit stunned when Jonas tells me he's asked his 14-year old nephew, Joe, to join us. Jonas explains that his nephew's parents and friends are "city



Ryan Aylesworth with dog Ole on a hunting trip. US-FWS photo.

folk" who rarely connect with the outdoors beyond the obligatory visit to a local dog park so that their pooch can stretch its legs. I am intrigued to learn that, despite limited encouragement from family or friends, Joe took

up deer hunting and trapping in the last couple years. I find this particularly fascinating, given the pervasive phenomenon popularly referred to as nature deficit disorder, which researchers have shown is on the rise and affecting

A New Experience for a Seasoned Grouse Hunter: Mentor

most all demographic groups (particularly urban youth). It sounds to me like Joe is doing his part to buck this troubling trend. I am, however, a little skeptical that Joe will ultimately enjoy getting up a couple hours before sunrise, sharing the backseat of a car with three gundogs for a 90-minute drive (each way), getting soaked to the bone and potentially ripped up by briars and other thorny vegetation, and likely seeing far fewer birds than we would under more favorable conditions. I'm not a pessimist by nature, but I am a realist. Jonas assures me his nephew will be eager to take part regardless of the weather and how the day otherwise plays out. I tell him to make certain Joe has the requisite rain gear and footwear. Cautious optimism best describes my sentiments as I hang up the phone.

As it turned out, the caution wasn't necessary. Joe was an absolute joy to have along. Sure, the rain pounded us relentless for the six hours we spent in the woods, but Joe's boundless enthusiasm made it pretty easy to overlook the conditions. We endured some of the most miserable early-season rain I've ever experienced. Our dogs labored especially hard for the birds they pointed or flushed. Joe didn't complain once. Far from it. His brain was like a sponge as he took advantage of breaks in the action to ask questions and learn as much as possible about upland bird hunting. We talked about a grouse's diet, its daily and seasonal use of various habitats, how a hunter effectively works

different cover types, and the adrenaline rush a hunter feels when a grouse thunderously flushes from the forest floor. We discussed shotguns and what types of loads to use when hunting grouse and other game birds. We talked about different breeds of gun dogs, and the adjustments a hunter makes when working with pointers versus flushers. We discussed hunter etiquette and ethics, as well as how to clean and prepare our harvest for scrumptious table fare. Although I hadn't necessarily envisioned doing so when we started the day, I was even presented an opportunity to demonstrate how one removes deeply imbedded porcupine quills from a dog's muzzle, gums and nose. Ole's proclivities for these armored critters caught up with him early in the afternoon. I told Joe this was the second time in about a year that Ole had accessorized his snout with an ornate collection of porcupine quills, and we speculated this could just be his way of growing the beard that genetics wouldn't allow him to. That, or perhaps long-term memory and reason aren't exactly the strong suits of my scent-driven canine companion.

Despite the weather conditions, quite a few birds cooperated and the three of us were fortunate to walk out of the woods with some heft to our game pouches. Of course, the real benefit for me was being able to help cultivate Joe's budding passion for hunting and the outdoors. The experience made me reflect back on my formative years growing up in northern

Maine, and the seasoned upland bird hunters that took the time to show me the ropes. Like Joe, because neither of my parents hunt, my exposure to upland bird hunting came entirely from friends and their relatives. Without patient and supportive mentors I may have never tried my hand at something that has ultimately come to play an influential role in my life. The reality is that, for me, upland bird hunting is far more than just another pastime. It has served, and continues to serve, as a catalyst for treasured friendships and memories. Upland bird hunting has also considerably shaped and informed my identity, values, and the perspectives I hold toward the world we inhabit.

Joe has hunted with us several times in the weeks that passed since our initial excursion. Ole and I are happy to have him come along anytime he'd like. Maybe upland bird hunting will become a central part of his identity, as well.

--Ryan Aylesworth
External Affairs



Around the Region

November Chinese Midwest Visit: A Follow Up



Left: WU Lilei observes surroundings at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. USFWS photo by Peter Ward.

Right: Chinese visitors look at Upper Mississippi River Refuge. USFWS photo by Peter Ward.



Right: Chen Jianwei and Refuge Manager Anne Sittauer enjoy the sun at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

The first mass marking season is nearing completion with more than 5.3 million fish tagged for stocking in Great Lakes. There were 4.2 million Lake trout and 1.1 million Chinook salmon tagged this year at federal and state fish hatcheries in the Great Lakes region thanks to two new automated tagging trailers owned and operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries program. This is the first year of implementation of a mass marking program to coded-wire tag and mark (finclip) state hatchery fish in addition to federal hatchery fish in the Great Lakes. This technique has been successfully used in the Northwest for marking hatchery-reared Pacific salmon, and is known as "mass-marking" since millions of fish are rapidly tagged and marked each year.

The mass marking season began the third week of March, and the final fish of the season will be tagged at Iron River National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin by mid-November.

The automated tagging trailers (developed by Northwest Marine Technology) are capable of marking up to 60,000 fish in a single eight-hour day amounting to an overall cost savings of 11 percent over manual methods. The automated trailer also provides better tag retention, more consistent tag placement, and easier tag recovery in the laboratory.



Above: Allen Lane makes adjustments to a tagging line at Iron River NFH. USFWS photo.

Mass-Marking by the numbers in 2010:

- 742,000 Chinook salmon at Platte River State Fish Hatchery in Michigan
- 362,000 Chinook salmon at Wild Rose State Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin
- 2 million Lake trout at Jordan River National Fish Hatchery
- 1 million Lake trout at Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery
- 1.2 million Lake trout at Iron River National Fish Hatchery

The Service also this year provided two technicians to work with the Department of Environmental Conservation in New York to collect tagged Chinook salmon recovered by sport fishing. These fish had been tagged and released from New York state hatcheries

over the past three years. "This has been a successful first year of implementation for the mass marking program. We were able to efficiently code-wire tag all lake trout in our three federal hatcheries, while also servicing the states of Wisconsin and Michigan," said Chuck Bronte, a fishery biologist and data analyst from the Service's Green Bay National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Bronte also serves as the Service lead for mass marking implementation in the Great Lakes.

"Working with Northwest Marine Technology's engineers and our state partners has far exceeded our expectations," said Bronte. Once the last fish are tagged this November the automated trailers will be transported to the Green Bay FWCO where they will be housed during the winter months.

--Ashley Spratt
External Affairs

In the News

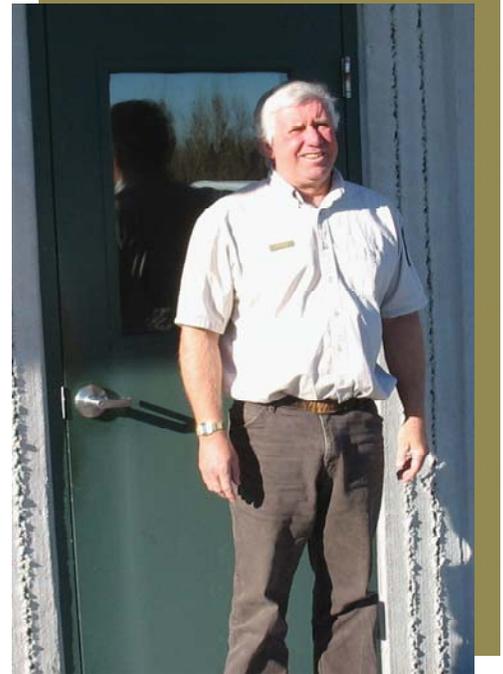
Retirement After 36 Years of Service

Kevin Brennan Retirement



After 36 years with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kevin Brennan is retiring on December 31.

An open house is planned for Wednesday, December 29, from 3:00 – 6:00 p.m. at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, 602 State Highway 210 E, Fergus Falls, Minn. 56537. The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District is planning to compile a book of memories. Please send any letters, stories, pictures, thoughts, or gift donations to Penny Petersen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 18965 County Highway 82, Fergus Falls, Minn. 56537 before December 17.



Tom Stockton Retirement



After 36 years of public service Tom Stockinger is retiring on December 31.

Please come celebrate with Tom at an open house on December 29 from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, 602 State Highway 210 E., Fergus Falls, Minn.

Refreshments will be served. A book of memories is planned so please send any letters, stories, pictures, thoughts or gift donations before December 17 to Dawn Johnson at the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service office, 18965 County Highway 82, Fergus Falls, Minn. 56537.



Conservation Planning Assistance: A Partnership for Fish Passage and Lake Sturgeon Restoration

For nearly a century, lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes have been denied access to critical spawning and rearing habitat due to the presence of dams throughout the basin. The Menominee River, which forms the border between northern Wisconsin and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is a major tributary to Lake Michigan and was historically one of the most important spawning areas for Great Lakes lake sturgeon. Unfortunately, however, the Menominee River also has several dams that block upstream migration of sturgeon.

Before dams, the Menominee River was a wild and scenic river of immense splendor that once cascaded over many natural waterfalls. Winding through the dense and wild Northwoods, the historic Menominee River would have been bounded by picturesque and alluring beauty.



Lake sturgeon, from all around the Great Lakes, would travel to the Menominee River to spawn in its pristine waters. Nearly half of the Lake Michigan sturgeon

Above: An impounded section of the Menominee River near Amberg, Wis. There are currently five dams like this one fragmenting habitat and preventing migration of sturgeon. Photo by Nick Utrup,



Above: A wild stretch of the Menominee River near Norway, Mich. Falls like this one were once common throughout the river. USFWS photo by Nick Utrup.

population, estimated to once be in the millions, would have historically migrated upstream nearly 90 miles into the Menominee River before reaching an impassible waterfall, near present day Norway, Mich. Currently, there are five dams that impede migration, resulting in a sturgeon

population that is only in the

thousands. Fortunately, much of this pristine habitat still exists between the dams, however, there needs to be a way to reconnect sturgeon to this habitat.

In light of this need, individuals from various agencies, organizations, and companies associated with the Menominee River have been working for years to reconnect sturgeon with their historical spawning grounds above the dams. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is leading this group of partners through a collaborative effort between Ecological Services and

Conservation Planning Assistance: A Partnership for Fish Passage and Lake Sturgeon Restoration

Fisheries, involving Nick Utrup, a fish and wildlife biologist with the Green Bay Ecological Services Field Office, and Rob Elliott, a fish biologist with the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office.

This unique partnership consists of fisheries, engineering, and management professionals from various state, federal, private, and not-for-profit organizations. Agency leadership consists of fisheries and bioengineering experts from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Not-for-profit organization are vital to this partnership and consist of the River Alliance of Wisconsin, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Michigan Hydro Re-licensing Coalition. Perhaps most importantly, private companies such as North American Hydro, and We Energies (the companies that own the dams) are all active and willing cooperators and are providing leadership to this magnificent partnership.

Through this collaborative partnership fish passage and protection plans have been, or are

Below: Partners planning fish passage while standing on top of Chalk Hill Dam. From the left, Ben Rizzo (USFWS engineer), Jim Fossum (River Alliance biologist), Rick Loeffler (North American Hydro) Shawn Puzen (Wisconsin Public Service), Todd Jastremski (We Energies), and Robb Elliott (USF fish biologist). Photo by Nick Utrup.



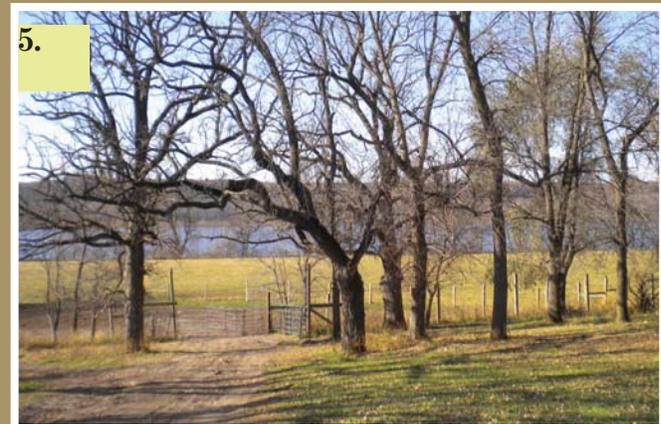
Above: A logo developed by the partners representing the Menominee River Fish Passage Partnership.

being, developed for all five dams within the lake sturgeon migration route. As part of the initiative, the partners submitted these fish passage and protection plans for funding through various sources. Thanks to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the project partners received \$3 million to begin construction of fish passage and protection structures at the lower two dams on the river. In response to the funding, North American Hydro (team partner and owner of the lower two dams) has pledged matching funding up to \$1.4 million.

The partners are thrilled to begin this great fish passage initiative, which is one of the most significant fish restoration projects underway in the Upper

Continued on back page.

Buffalo Transfer from Neal Smith NWR to the Prairie Island Indian



On November 4, the Neal Smith National Refuge in Iowa rounded up excess bison and transferred them to the Prairie Island Indian Community in southeast Minnesota. In total, 13 animals were transferred, in cooperation with the Inter-tribal Bison Cooperative.

Above: 1. Alan Childs is Maintenance Director for the PIIC and manages the Buffalo Project; 2. Sign to the Edwin Buck Jr. Memorial Buffalo Project at the PIIC; 3. One of 13 bison or buffalo transferred from Neal Smith NWR to the PIIC. 4. Buffalo from Neal Smith NWR at their new home at the PIIC; 5. PIIC Buffalo Project site; 6. Part of a 350+ acre parcel that the PIIC will be converting into a buffalo grazing pasture.

In Their Own Words

From a Young Man's Point of View

Youth Duck Hunt at Hamden Slough

I loved this duck hunt! The night before the hunt I saw pretty much every duck during the identification speech at the duck shed. It was a lot of really good information. When I left that night, I kept thinking this was going to be so much fun. Before I knew it, it was the next morning at a quarter after four. I was tired, but so excited at the same time. As soon as we got to the duck shed at 5:30 a.m., I ate a doughnut and then I was out the door and at the pond. There is nothing more magical than watching the sun come up, and the ducks flying and landing at Hamden Slough. Before I knew it, it was 6:30 a.m., and I dropped my first duck. It was a blue-winged teal. Then I shot 2 more blue-winged teals, and a hen mallard. Then the hunt was over. I was amazed at how I started to be able to identify ducks. Greg was my mentor and he was so awesome! He knew everything there was to know about Hamden Slough. He taught me how to find out the age and gender of the ducks. Boomer was a cool dog and did such a good job retrieving the ducks. Tina was really good at taking a lot of awesome pictures of the fun I had. You can see them here: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/hamdenyouthhunt.htm>



Young Mitch Virnig on the watch at Hamden Slough. USFWS photo.

The hunt was great and I'd like to thank all the U.S. Fish and Wildlife people. Thanks to Reeds Sporting Goods for the decoys and the nice hats. And, thanks to Fine Line Retrievers for giving me the 2 hunting DVDs. Thanks to Jim Demgen from Ducks Unlimited for being a big part of putting this all together. And thanks to the friends of Hamden Slough for all the food they made for us hunters. I really had a great time and a great hunt.

Mitch Virnig

Mentoring the Next Generation

Winona High School teacher Brian Sather's environmental studies class enjoyed learning to operate Global Positioning System Technology. This is one of six programs taught for the fall semester by Park Ranger Edward Lagace of the Winona District USFWS



Above: USFWS photo.

USFWS Recognizes Wisconsin Statewide Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan Accomplishments

On April 7, Louise Clemency and Cathy Carnes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office presented Certificates of Appreciation to the 40 partners of the Wisconsin Statewide Karner Blue Butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) at their winter meeting held in Stevens Point, Wis.

The Service recognizes that this is a pivotal time for the partnership as it marks the completion of the first 10 years of HCP implementation and the renewal of its conservation commitments for an additional 10 years. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on behalf of the HCP partnership has submitted an application to the Service for renewal of the incidental take permit for implementation of the HCP (initially issued in 1999). Dave Lentz, Wisconsin Statewide Karner Blue Butterfly HCP Coordinator receives a Certificate

of Appreciation from Louise Clemency and Cathy Carnes from the Service's Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office. The certificate was presented during the HCP Winter Meeting held April 7 in Stevens Point, Wis.



Above: Dave Lentz, WI Statewide Karner Blue Butterfly HCP Coordinator receives a Certificate of Appreciation from Louise Clemency and Cathy Carnes from the USFWS's Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office. The certificate was presented during the HCP Winter Meeting held April 7, 2010 in Stevens Point, Wis. Photo courtesy of WDNR.

The Certificates of Appreciation were presented in recognition and appreciation for all the expertise and dedication the HCP partners have contributed to the KBB conservation program in Wisconsin. Their work has insured the persistence of the butterfly in the state, increased the understanding of the butterfly's distribution, and helped to refine the high potential range of the species Wisconsin.

The HCP partners receiving Certificates include the Wisconsin DNR, 5 industrial forests, 8 county forest companies, 12 utilities, 11 town or county highway departments, The Nature Conservancy, and the Wisconsin Departments of Transportation and Agriculture.



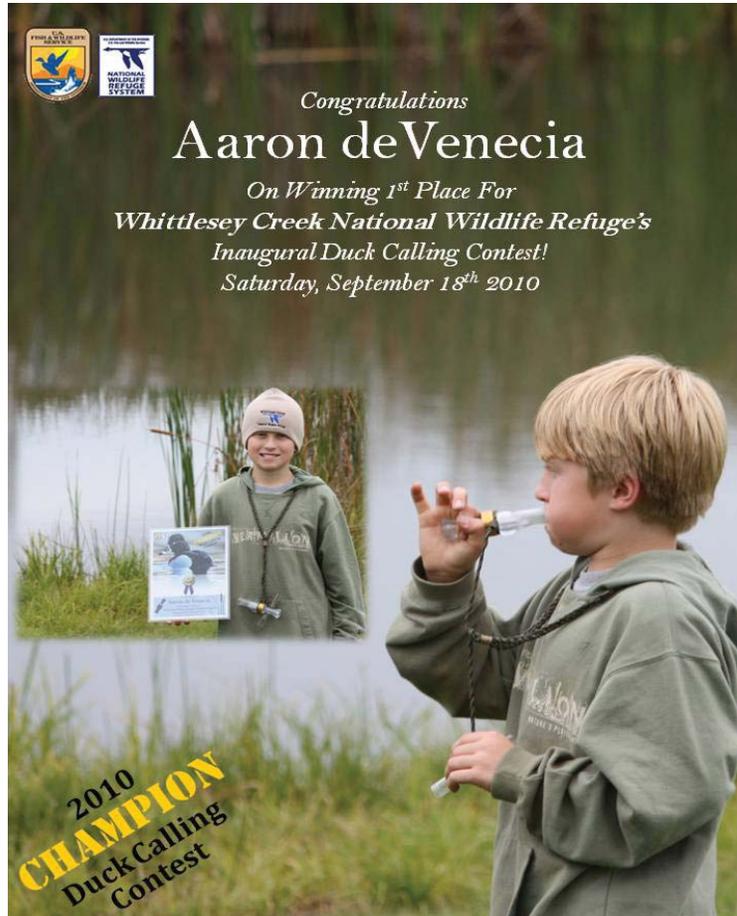
Help Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Learn about Minnesota's connection to Alaska through bird migration routes and join the Minnesota Kite Society for a special kite flying at the refuge. Educational events for kids and nature-lovers of all ages will be on-going from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Sun. Dec. 5 at the Bloomington Visitor Center. For more information, contact the Visitor Center at 952.854.5900. To learn more about the Minnesota Kite Society, check out their website. <http://www.mnkites.org/>

WHITTLESEY CREEK NWR - JUST DUCKY

So what makes a championship duck call? The answer is difficulty, accuracy and repetition, and 11-year-old Aaron de Venecia of Ashland, Wis. had it all. He's the champion of the inaugural duck calling contest hosted by Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

The precocious 5th grader participated in the refuge's waterfowl identification course before the opening day of youth duck season, which concluded with a duck calling competition. Refuge visitor services manager, Kevin Lowry, taught the two-hour course that focused on waterfowl identification by sight and sound, silhouettes, wing beats, flock patterns and behavior. The course was open to all birders, hunters, photographers and wildlife enthusiasts.

Aaron had a successful hunt, as he harvested his first wood duck on opening day. Eric de Venecia, father of Aaron, said "It was a great seminar to get the kids fired up about hunting and the outdoors! Due to the class," he said, "Aaron was able to independently identify a blue wing teal we saw in flight on opening day. He was excited and had a blast."



Above: CHAMPION - Aaron de Venecia, 11, of Ashland, Wis. was the winner of the first duck-calling contest hosted by Whittlesey Creek NWR. USFWS photo by Kevin J. Lowry at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center.

Local birding club members judged the duck calling contest. "Contestants were judged on their ability to summon a flight of ducks using each of the following four calls: long-distance call, mating call, feeding call and comeback call.

The emphasis was on difficulty, accuracy and repetition," said Lowry.

The course was intended to introduce waterfowl identification to youth and serve as a refresher course for adult duck hunters. Refuge staff made every effort to recruit experienced adult duck hunters to serve as mentors as well. Additionally, the course provided an opportunity for all wildlife enthusiasts to share their field knowledge. "As a avid birder and duck hunter myself," Lowry said, "I constantly remind participants that a good duck hunter is

a great birder. The course and contest both served as great practice and are powerful tools to build self confidence and responsibility."

Additional photos may be viewed at www.facebook.com/usfwsrefuges. Read more at www.fws.gov/refuges and share your tips for good duck calling.

--Kevin J. Lowry,
Whittlesey Creek NWR

Disabled Hunters Have Hunt of a Lifetime

The special deer hunt for sportsmen with disabilities was held at the Lost Mound Unit (former Savanna Army Depot) of Upper Mississippi Refuge on November 13 and 14. Hunters and their assistants were treated to the hunt of a lifetime. Field surveys showed the deer population to be about double the recommended population levels and big bucks were abundant.

This special hunt allowed 25 hunters and their assistants to harvest four deer each. There were 33 hunters that applied through random drawing. A medical disability classification was a requirement and assistants must be able to track and retrieve deer. The hunt was conducted in areas that were closed to public hunting due to the ongoing environmental cleanup effort. A total of 27 deer were harvested including 17 does and 10 bucks. The largest buck was an 8 pointer with a field dressed weight of 205 pounds.

This special hunt was held one week prior to Illinois' First Firearms Deer Season. The participation by out of state and down-state Illinois hunters continued to increase. Hunters travelled from Louisiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Iowa, Wisconsin and Central/Southern Illinois.



Terry Greenwood blows through a tube to fire his shotgun. USFWS photo.



Above: Scott Hansen proudly displays his trophy buck. USFWS photo.

An interesting part of the hunt was the personal challenges of the hunters that participated. There were six in wheelchairs and two amputees. One hunter,

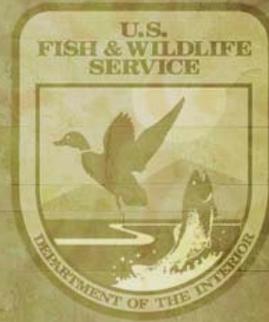
a quadriplegic, maneuvered his specially mounted gun on target by manipulating a controller box with his chin. When a deer was in the cross hairs, he blew through a tube to engage an electronic trigger to fire the shotgun.

Lost Mound Site Manager, Alan Anderson was excited about the continued success of this program and stated "It was a high quality hunting experience by

a special group of sportsmen. Their daily challenges of living were overshadowed by the enthusiasm and determination for deer hunting. They provided both inspiration and encouragement to the staff and volunteers that administered the hunt."

The disabled and youth deer hunts will be held at Lost Mound again next year. If you are interested in more information on these special hunts, contact the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge office at 815-273-2732.

--Ed Britton
Upper Mississippi NW&FR
Savanna District



Grand Opening

Remembering our Past



Celebrating our Future



Neosho National Fish Hatchery

Thursday, December 9, 2010

9:30 a.m. Ceremony

10:30 a.m. Ribbon Cutting

10:45 a.m. Formal Tours

11:00 a.m. Lunch

12:00 - 5:00 p.m. Open House

*Come celebrate with live music,
lunch and tours!*

Disabled Access Deer Hunt at Rice Lake NWR

The 4th annual deer hunt by persons with disabilities was held at Rice Lake NWR, McGregor, Minn. October 7 – 10. Hunters, 17 in total, participated this year and were rewarded with beautiful fall weather. Last year the complaint was that the weather was too cold and rainy so that it was difficult to stay warm and dry. This year with temperatures in the 70s the complaint was that there were too many mosquitoes!

All participants were strongly encouraged to sight in their rifles at the nearby shooting range, operated by the Minnewawa Sportsmen's Club. Those hunters that did go to the range were aided by several volunteers to ensure everything was done safely and assistance was available when needed. Two of the hunters were legally blind, making it especially important that they worked out a method of sighting, communication, and firing their guns at the range with their respective volunteer assistants prior to going afield.

Following the firearms sight in session there was a mandatory hunter orientation at the refuge shop, which was transformed into the deer camp. Tables and chairs replaced tool boxes and vehicles while the vehicle hoist became the buffet table. Hunt procedures as well as state and refuge hunting regulations were reviewed. The McGregor Chapter of the MN Deer Hunters Association provided door prizes for all hunters. In

return, two of the hunters provided a few door prizes for the volunteers that give so generously of their time in providing them this hunt year after year. It

meal as everyone tended to balance a second piece of cake on top of their heaped up plate!

Four out of the 17 hunters filled their tag this year, including two of them getting 8-point bucks. While this was the fourth year of the hunt this is the first year that any bucks have been taken. Both hunters were extremely pleased with their luck and enjoyed telling their deer hunting story to anyone that would listen. For those that were offered a shot but missed, they too had a story to tell that at times was equally as entertaining as those that were successful.

The disabled access deer hunt at Rice Lake NWR has become a community event. While it seems that essentially everyone that lives locally knows about the hunt, it has also garnered interest and support from a great many people and organizations from around the state. While it's no question that this hunt is a great deal of work for staff, the dividends it pays is enormous!

For more information about the disabled access deer hunt at Rice Lake NWR should call Walt Ford at 218-768-2402. Or better still, plan on spending a day or two with Walt and his volunteers during next year's hunt, October 6-9, 2011.

--Walt Ford
Rice Lake NWR Refuge
Manager



Above: Hunters and volunteers on day one of the 2010 deer hunt by persons with disabilities at Rice Lake NWR. Photo by Walt Ford/USFWS.

takes approximately 50 individual volunteers with a combined effort of 1,200 hours/year to make ready for and carry out this annual hunting effort.

It was also volunteers that cooked and served a delicious meal everyday at noon and again every night after the hunters came in from their stands. A few of the main courses consisted of venison brats, deep fried walleye fillets, and bear stew, all very tasty and a culinary delight in any hunt camp! While the main courses were prepared on site, the desserts and salads were prepared at the homes of those also wanting to donate to the effort, but unable or not interested in volunteering any additional time. One day we had 10 different cakes donated but only two salads. In spite of what you might think it was still a balanced



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/>

December 2010

Mariah Cook was recently named Outstanding Volunteer of the Year by Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Mariah, who is a senior at Northland College majoring in biology, completed her internship obligations for her bachelor's degree by serving as an intern for the refuge. She volunteered nearly 400 hours of her personal time during June, July and August.

--Kevin J. Lowry, R3-Whittlesey Creek NWR

Right: Mariah Cook is all smiles, as she is the 2010 Outstanding Volunteer of the Year, for Whittlesey Creek NWR. USFWS photo by Mike Mlynarek, Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center.



Fish Passage Partners Continued

Midwest. To celebrate this project and involve the public, the partners organized a "dignitary" tour on October 8, and a community event on October 9 at the lower dam's powerhouse in Menominee, Mich. The "dignitary" event featured a "behind-the-scenes" tour designed especially for the partner organizations and the funding agencies where the partners showcased this project to the leaders of the organizations that are making this project possible. The community event was an open house where members of the community were granted full access to the grounds through dam tours and interaction with

the partners. In the morning, there were kids fishing and casting contest with plenty of prizes and a free lunch at noon. This event was designed to involve the greater community and provide an opportunity to learn about lake sturgeon and how this fish passage project will help revitalize the ancient and venerable lake sturgeon.

The partnership is pleased to estimate that fish passage at the lower two dams will be fully functional by 2014. This project will open up 21 miles of river and could produce up to 20,000 new adult sturgeon in just a few

years. The partnership hopes to complete fish passage at all five dams 2020, which would open up 90 miles of river and could produce up to 50,000 new fish. The partnership continues to seek out funding support to maintain this important initiative. If you have any questions about this project or initiative, please contact Nick Utrup at 920-866-1736 or Nick_Utrup@fws.gov.

--Reprinted from the *The Wisconsin Ecological Services Field Office Newsletter*

Thank you for entering your journal reports and photographs in the Fish and Wildlife Journal (aka. ARS)
<http://ars.fws.gov>.