

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

August 2012



Saturday,

HOME STATE CELEBRATION!

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Home State Celebration

I spent the last month on a detail in the Washington Office as the Deputy Director. I worked in D.C. for more than a decade, but it has been many years since I've spent more than a few days in our nation's capitol. It was a great experience and I encourage anyone who has the opportunity to work on a detail in D.C. to do it. However, it is great to be back in the Midwest Region.

While in D.C., my duties brought me back to the Midwest for two events. The first was to represent the Director at the North American Wetland Conservation Act Council meeting at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls, Minn. This group grants approximately \$30 million across the nation to benefit wetlands conservation. Some of the members of the Council had not seen the prairie's of Minnesota and the Dakotas, so it was a great opportunity to show them how important these areas are to waterfowl.

In late July, I also represented the Director at the Federal Duck Stamp Home State event, held in South St. Paul, honoring winning artist Joe Hautman. As part of the event, I joined a few Midwest Region staff and some of our parnters for a friendly sporting clays shoot (see the bottom right photo). Refuge Supervisor Jim Leach is a heck of a shot but External Affairs reps Chuck Traxler and Scott Flaherty were a little off their game. Bob St. Pierre shot well and "Captain" Billy Hildebrand from KFAN Outdoors kept score. Your Regional Director brought home the high score.

One of the things I was able to do while in Washington D.C. as acting Deputy Director was speak to the Advanced Leadership Development Program graduates at the National Conservation Training Center. It was a pleasure visiting the next leaders of the agency. Here in the Region, we just selected our next group of Stepping Up to Leadership students, congratulations to them all.

Do you know the difference between bighead and silver carp? Our External Affairs shop just put out this great video on how to identify the different types of Asian carp. Take a look! https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=B49OWrCRs38

Tom Melius
Midwest Regional
Director



Below: Billy Hildebrand (KFAN Radio), Service Regional Director Tom Melius, Federal Duck Stamp Artist Joe Hautman, Service Assistant Director of Migratory Bird Program Jerome Ford, Adam Schiff, Outreach Director for Sen. Klobuchar, Jim Hodgson, Chief of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. Service photo.



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius with Advanced Leadership Development Program graduates. Service photo.



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius looks on with other shooters. Service photo.

Partners Celebrate Achievements of Wildlife Artist Joe Hautman and Federal Duck Stamp Success

Partners from the wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation community hosted the 2012 Federal Duck Stamp Home State Ceremony and Clays Shoot in honor of four-time Federal Duck Stamp artist and Minnesota native Joe Hautman at the South Saint Paul Rod and Gun Club on Saturday, July 14.

Hautman's acrylic rendition of a drake wood duck was recently selected as the 2012 Federal Duck Stamp, making this his fourth Federal Duck Stamp win since 1991. Hautman is considered by many as one of the country's most talented wildlife artists. "I came to learn about the importance of conservation as a child after asking my dad about his beautiful collection of Federal Duck Stamps. He explained what they were and what they meant for wildlife," said Hautman. "It was a thrill for me to be able to design one of these stamps 30 years later, and I am proud to continue to be associated with such a vital and widely supported conservation program."

The Federal Duck Stamp is annually produced from the winning artwork of a nationally recognized competition among artists from across the country. The stamp is sold for \$15, and 98 cents of every dollar is invested in the acquisition of lands to be permanently protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System. Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have helped to purchase nearly six million acres of wildlife habitat.

"Wildlife artists like Joe Hautman inspire others to build an appreciation for wildlife through art," said Assistant Director Jerome Ford of the Service's



Four-time Federal Duck Stamp artist Joe Hautman speaks with Jerome Ford, Assistant Director of the Service's Migratory Bird Program at the 2012-2013 Federal Duck Stamp Home State Ceremony held at the South Saint Paul Gun Club. Service photo.

Migratory Bird Program, which administers the Federal Duck Stamp Program. "Buying a Federal Duck Stamp is a simple way that anyone can contribute to conservation and own a small work of wildlife art."

Guests participated in shooting sports and a silent auction in the morning, and a home state ceremony featuring remarks from artist Joe Hautman and local and federal officials was held in the afternoon.

Proceeds from shooting sports and the silent auction will be dedicated to wetland and grassland restoration on a waterfowl production area

adjacent to Pelican Lake in Wright County, Minn. Waterfowl production areas provide public recreation opportunities including hunting, fishing, bird watching, photography, and environmental education. Restored wetlands and grasslands provide habitat for an array of wildlife including mallards, bobolinks, western grebes, ring-necked pheasants, and white-tailed deer.

For more information about the Federal Duck Stamp program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/>

*--By Ashley Spratt
External Affairs*

Fish Habitat Partnerships and Landscape Conservation Cooperative Drive Changes in Aquatic Predictions

From the Rocky Mountains to the mid Atlantic, conservationists are joining forces to better understand variables impacting the health of fish populations and their habitats, and, to generate scientific information that can inform land-use decisions and direct conservation efforts across large landscapes.

Aquatic species from endangered mussels to native brook trout contribute to functioning ecosystems and provide fundamental economic value to local communities. Ensuring efficient and strategic management of these natural resources is key to addressing evolving stressors like agricultural land-use, invasive species, habitat fragmentation and climate change.

This landscape level view of conservation is materializing across the nation with the development of a network of 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, science-

driven partnerships that cross jurisdictional and geographic boundaries in the natural resources community to combat stressors impacting our environment.

The Plains and Prairie Potholes Landscape Conservation Cooperative, established to support impactful conservation actions across the prairie pothole region, northern Great Plains and riparian corridors of the Missouri, Yellowstone and northern Red Rivers, is working in collaboration with an existing network of National Fish Habitat Partnerships, which have a successful history of leveraging federal, state, and private funding sources to achieve the greatest impact on fish populations through priority conservation projects. This multi-partner effort has resulted in the development of

advanced fish habitat assessment models using a geographic information system to support efficient, targeted and strategic management of aquatic resources.

The Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC aims to provide a platform to share information and resources such as the fish habitat assessment modeling tool that will help land-use managers and conservation managers make decisions to benefit fish and wildlife resources. The fish habitat modeling tool will allow users to identify the habitat conditions of specific sections of streams and rivers and predict responses to anthropogenic and biologic changes in those habitat conditions, which will ultimately help natural resources managers take a landscape-level approach across watersheds to management decisions and conservation actions.

West Virginia based environmental consulting firm Downstream Strategies built the decision-support tool which will be available to land managers, watershed groups and conservation-oriented communities, and will help decision makers make more effective, informed decisions about habitat restoration, fish passage and other conservation activities. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fishery biologists and Fish Habitat Partnership coordinators Maureen Gallagher and Steve Krentz, are helping lead this effort in collaboration with multiple state and non-governmental agencies vested in aquatic conservation. “What we will have is an idea of the severity of human impacts on specific segments of stream, and then we have an assumption that the severity of those impacts also tells us how degraded a particular [fish] population may be,” Gallagher said. Gallagher coordinated a training session with other Fish



Above: Mark Brouder of the Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership tests mapping capabilities of a GIS tool. Service photo.

Fish Habitat Partnerships and Landscape Conservation Cooperative Drive Changes in Aquatic Predictions

Habitat Partnership representatives, including field staff from the Service, The Nature Conservancy, and state natural resources agencies. The training session was held this spring at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, Missouri. The training provided staff from across programs, agencies and geographic boundaries the opportunity to provide input on improving the tool's capabilities, so that it can fill gaps in current scientific assessments, and help their agencies make management decisions about aquatic resources in the future.

Mark Brouder, who represents the Service on the Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Partnership, attended Gallagher's training on the Geographic Information System assessment tool, to learn how his staff can utilize the tool across the Great Lakes basin. "This tool is going to help us from a decision standpoint to better understand what stressors are on the landscape and how they are affecting aquatic habitats,"

Brouder said. "We are hoping that we can then use the tool to prioritize where we look in the future to put our limited resources on the landscape, to make sure we are doing the right things in the right places."

John Stark represents The Nature Conservancy as part of the Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership which pulls together partners from more than 50 state, federal and non governmental organizations for strategic conservation and management of over 160,000 square miles of the Ohio River basin.

"If we try to work everywhere we will have a very diffuse effort. You're not going to get focused results," Stark said. "We need to be able to prioritize, spend the limited funds we have and direct partners to key areas."

"There are certain aspects of

restoration and rehabilitation where you have to understand what factors contribute to anthropogenic damage or habitat loss in these streams, and whether you have the authorities and tools to repair the streams," said Paul Cunningham, fishery biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and representative of the Driftless Area Restoration Effort Fish Habitat Partnership.

"The Downstream Strategies modeling efforts created tools we need to help us zoom in, select, find watersheds or catchments, and help identify what we need to do to repair them," Cunningham said.

"My opinion of landscape conservation is looking at a conservation of our natural resources from a larger viewpoint, larger than a tribe, state or single source issue," Krentz said. "We are seeing folks working together on aquatic and terrestrial issues and making linkages across habitats that have systematic effects on populations."

For an interactive demonstration of the aquatic habitat assessment decision support tool visit www.midwestfishhabitats.org

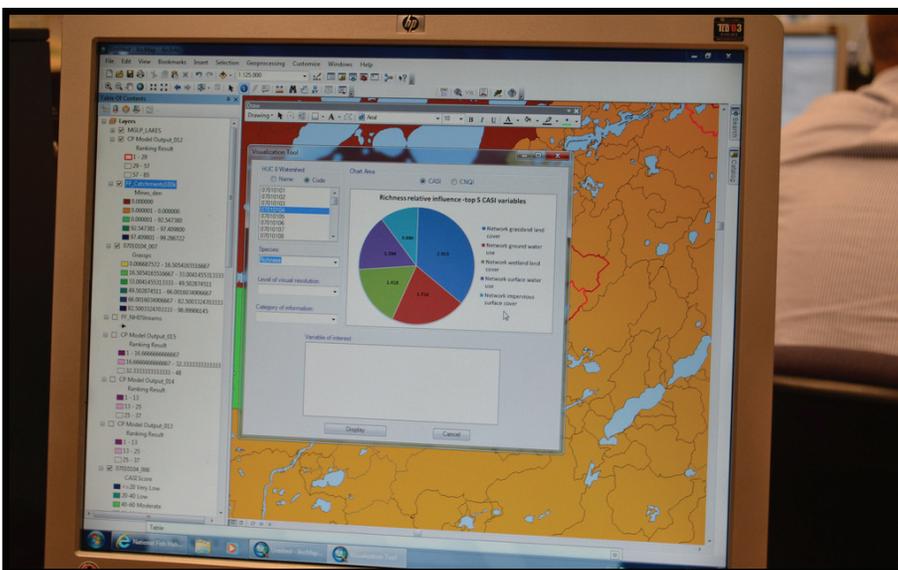
-- Ashley Spratt
External Affairs

For More Information
Visit These Sites

Website:

<http://www.plainsandprairiepotholeslcc.org/>

Full Flickr album: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/plainsandprairie/sets/72157629728607128/>



Above: Visual of variable contributions to a habitat assessment. Service photo.

Endangered Mussels Affected by Indiana Drought

The Service's Bloomington Ecological Services Field Office is taking steps to ensure the survival of several federally endangered species of freshwater mussels in the Tippecanoe River in Indiana that have been affected by the summer's high temperatures and low rainfall.

On July 5, the Service asked Northern Indiana Public Service Company to maintain a minimum flow from Oakdale Dam on Lake Freeman into the Tippecanoe River to alleviate low water conditions in the river that exposed mussel beds and caused the stranding and death of large numbers of mussels, including federally endangered species.

"The reality is, there is less water available for people and for wildlife. This drought is causing water levels to drop throughout the state, and it is now being felt in places like the Tippecanoe River, which supports some of the most diverse mussel populations in the country," said Scott Pruitt, supervisor of the Service's Bloomington, Indiana, field office. "The Service's goal is to maintain the survival of mussels, some of which are in danger of extinction, as well as preserve as much as possible the recreational and other uses of the lakes and the Tippecanoe River itself."

There are five federally endangered species in the portion of the Tippecanoe River below Oakdale Dam. They include the clubshell, fanshell, rayed been, sheepsnose and snuffbox. The rabbitsfoot, a candidate for federal listing is also found here, along with several state-listed mussel species.

Pruitt said the Service is working with NIPSCO and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to respond to the low water events that have twice

exposed large numbers of mussels in the Tippecanoe River in the past two weeks, killing some endangered mussels. Based on the best available information, a minimum release of 200 cubic feet per second of water from Oakdale Dam into the Tippecanoe River is needed to prevent additional mortality of endangered mussels. NIPSCO is maintaining that minimal release while exploring other options, including pursuing a permit for incidental take of endangered mussels.

Pruitt said mussels are sometimes stranded during normal summertime conditions, but this year's exposures of mussel beds in the Tippecanoe River are unprecedented. Mussel populations are slow to recover from such events, which are especially detrimental to endangered species, whose numbers are already critically low.

Water levels in the lower Tippecanoe River are at historic lows. The flow is almost 200 cfs below the previously measured low, which occurred during the drought of 1988, and is more than 1,000 cfs below average for this time of year.

Around the state, the drought is having significant impacts on agricultural crops, waterways and impoundments. According to data from the National Weather Service (<http://water.weather.gov/>), water levels at Morse Reservoir near Indianapolis dropped almost 2 feet between July 1 and July 12. In southern Indiana, Patoka Reservoir is more than 3 feet below normal summer pool level.

For more information on endangered species and freshwater mussels, visit www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered.

--Georgia Parham,
External Affairs



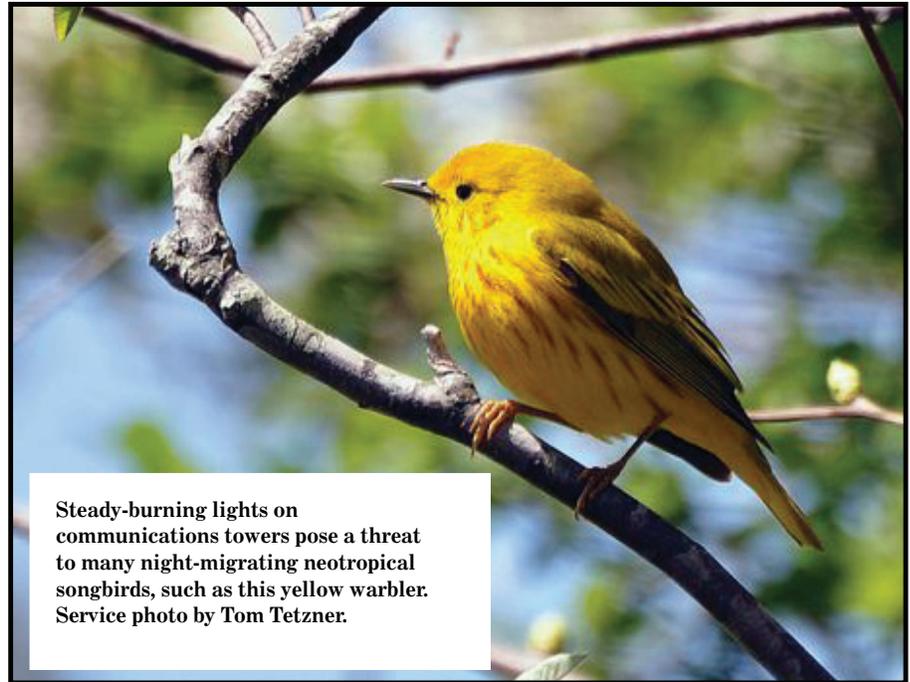
Scott Pruitt, field supervisor at the Bloomington Endangered Species field Office, holds an endangered fanshell mussel found while surveying mussels in the Tippecanoe River in Indiana. Service photo by Georgia Parham.

Change in Safety Lighting on Communications Towers Could Save Millions of Birds Every Year

Many bird species migrate long distances at night. Shorebirds, waterfowl, sparrows, warblers, and thrushes are common nocturnal migrants. Migrating at night may allow birds to avoid predators, to take advantage of calm air, or to refuel by stopping to feed during daylight while on migration. Certain types of lighting on communication towers can pose a significant risk to birds migrating at night. A recent report that evaluates lighting on communications towers will lead to changes that could prevent the deaths of millions of migratory birds due to collisions with towers.

In May 2012, the Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates safety lighting on communications towers, issued a report that paves the way for a change in requirements for lights on towers that warn pilots of obstructions. Many towers use continuously burning red lights at night to alert nearby aircraft, but studies by wildlife biologists indicate that steady lights draw night-flying birds into the towers where they collide with tower's support wires, causing millions of bird deaths each year. The FAA determined that flashing lights, which attract only a fraction of the number of birds, are safe and conspicuous to pilots.

Wildlife organizations, the telecommunication industry, and the Federal Communication Commission, which licenses communication towers, asked the Federal Aviation Administration to consider redefining their standards for obstruction lighting to either omit or flash the normally steady-burning red lights to reduce their impact on the mortality rates of migratory birds. The FAA's report is a response to that request.



Steady-burning lights on communications towers pose a threat to many night-migrating neotropical songbirds, such as this yellow warbler. Service photo by Tom Tetzner.

The FAA Airport Technology Research and Development Team evaluated the proposal to omit or flash the normally steady-burning red lights. In addition, researchers evaluated the potential benefit of using light-emitting diode obstruction lights instead of conventional incandescent obstruction lights as a way to lessen their impact on birds, due to their unique color and flash pattern. A series of flight evaluations was conducted to compare the obstruction lighting on several communication towers in Michigan.

The results showed that flashing the steady-burning lights was acceptable for small towers (151 to 350 feet in height) and that they could be omitted on taller towers (over 351 feet) as long as the remaining brighter, flashing lights were operational.

Based on the results of this research, the FAA proposes to make specific changes to the obstruction lighting standards, including a proposal to omit or flash steady-burning red lights from several obstruction lighting configurations.

The FAA cited studies by Dr. Joelle Gehring, Senior Conservation Scientist, Michigan State University's Michigan Natural Features Inventory, of bird collisions with communications towers in Michigan and New Jersey. Dr. Gehring's 2010 report documents that changing a tower's lighting system can reduce avian fatalities by more than 70 percent. Dr. Gehring's work was completed in conjunction with of an evaluation by the Service's East Lansing Field Office of the effects of towers on endangered Kirtland's warblers.

--Georgia Parham,
External Affairs

Asian Carp Outreach and Education

What do law enforcement and fisheries management have to do with each other? A lot if you are talking about Asian carp.

Two species of Asian carp, bighead and silver, are listed as injurious under the Lacey Act. The law makes it illegal to transport live bighead or silver carps across states lines. Yet recent law enforcement activities have demonstrated that shipments of live Asian carps are routinely being unlawfully transported across the United States in violation of federal and state laws. Within the last year shipments of live fish have been interdicted at the Canadian border destined for the food markets in Toronto. It is also expected that illegal

shipments are hauled to other large cities in the lower 48 states and Canada, where live Asian carp are highly valued in the food market.

In an effort to reduce the illegal transport of live Asian carp, the Midwest Region's Office of Law Enforcement is launching a new outreach initiative to assist in educating the law enforcement community about Asian carp. With the assistance of the Midwest Fisheries Program and External Affairs, the Office of Law Enforcement created an eight minute video that demonstrates how to identify bighead and silver carp, as well as telltale signs of potential illegal fish haulers. The video is

accompanied by an educational brochure that includes photographs of different species of carp as a point of reference and outlines what an officer should do if he or she encounters a vehicle suspected of illegally transporting live Asian carp.

With support from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Midwest Region's Office of Law Enforcement is doing its part to help apprehend the companies, drivers, and vehicles that illegally ship live Asian carps in interstate commerce.

--Kaitlin Steiger-Meister, Ph.D.
External Affairs



Kaitlin Steiger-Meister, Ph.D. films with Jeff Stewart from the Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office at Middle Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge in Modoc, Ill. Service photo.

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge: Creating Jobs to Help Restore Lake Erie

In August 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative was setting aside approximately \$6 million for federal agencies to submit proposals to help restore the Great Lakes and put Americans back to work. Through this effort, the EPA was intending to create was a small-scale, 21st century Civilian Conservation Corps. Through this request, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge submitted a proposal and was awarded \$480,000 to hire 30 temporary seasonal employees. Creative budgeting and planning yielded an even more positive result, with five additional positions being added, for a total of 35 new hires.

The positions were divided up between the refuge and conservation partners, including the Ottawa County Soil and Water Conservation District, Lake Erie Cooperative Weed Management Association and Black Swamp Bird Observatory. The refuge was able to hire 22 seasonal employees including seven biological science technicians, two park rangers, two maintenance workers, one assistant office clerk, eight Youth Conservation Corps students, an intern and a contract employee to oversee and coordinate the grant. In addition, refuge partners hired 13 seasonal employees including a wetland educator, several invasive plant technicians and various nonpoint source pollution and other outreach educators. These combined resources from Ottawa Refuge and the wider conservation collective work collaboratively to develop and implement various conservation, restoration and outreach programs which focus on GLRI principal actions as they relate to the National Wildlife Refuge System and



Staff photo highlighting all the seasonal hires. Service photo.

other partnering agencies and organizations missions or purposes.

This conservation collective proposed various projects that would augment existing refuge and partner programs to benefit coastal wetlands and develop outreach efforts for a more widespread conservation benefit. An extensive water quality monitoring program was developed in partnership with U.S. Geological Survey staff to establish baseline water quality data, and to evaluate aquatic resource threats and implications to refuge management and coastal wetland restoration. Bathymetric surveys of refuge wetland impounds were completed to provide the refuge with general elevation data to adaptively manage wetlands for migratory birds under looming climate change threats. Park rangers and other seasonal staff expanded the refuge's interpretive and environmental education programs reaching a more

diverse audience connecting kids and adults to nature. New GLRI displays, brochures, and other outreach materials including presentations were or are being developed to deliver a strong unified Great Lakes restoration and conservation message. Invasive plant management in and around Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge has been a major focus for the refuge and partners. Invasive plant mapping, monitoring, and control efforts have been fully implemented on the refuge and within watersheds around the refuge. Seasonal wage grade maintenance workers are actively restoring and enhance refuge wetlands and other wildlife habitats. Dikes, ditches, and water control structures in desperate need of repair and rehabilitation have been given the needed attention, thus improving refuge water management to help meet the Service's mission in Ohio.

--Jason Lewis, Ottawa National
Wildlife Refuge Manager

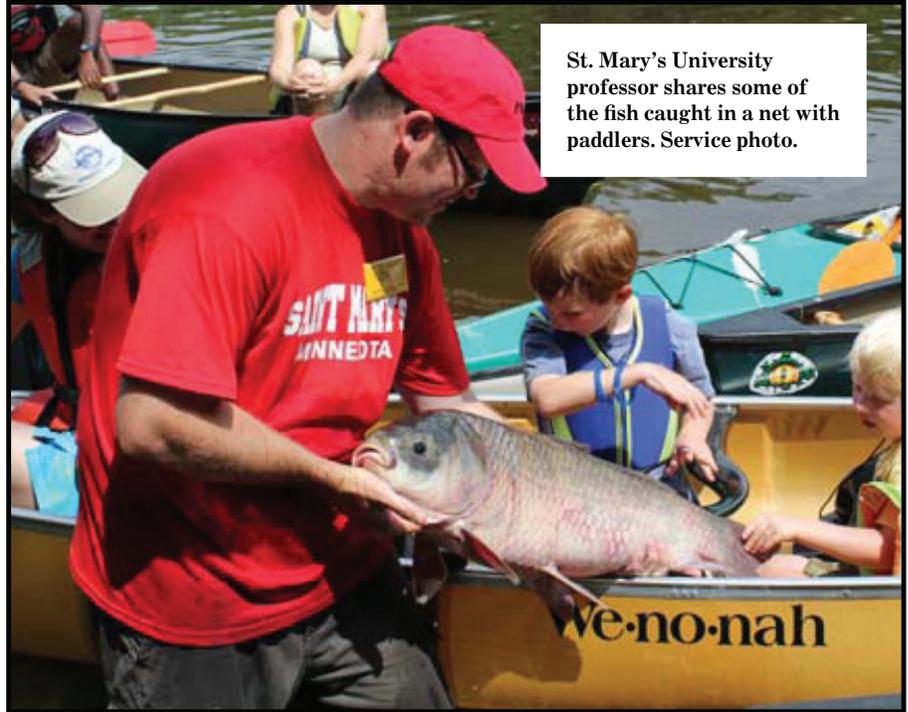
Minnesota State Water Trails Day

Something that has been thought about and worked on for many years finally came to fruition. Mike Cichanowski owner and CEO of Wenonah Canoes had dreamed about having a Water Trails Day opener for the state of Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources including the Water Trails Advisory Committee, partnered with Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Visit Winona, Winona Parks and Recreation, Saint Mary's University, Project Get Outdoors and Wenonah Canoes to make the Water Trails Day happen on July 14.

Mike Cichanowski commented, "I know I've been talking about this with past governors and we've tried to make it happen. This year everything has come together." Governor Dayton declared July 14, 2012 as the State of Minnesota Water Trails Day. Each year, the opener will move from city to city and Winona, Minn. will always be known as the kick off city. Refuge Manager, Kevin Foerster commented, "It's exciting to see the Summer of Paddling initiative be the catalyst for this."



Above: Keaton Miles, biology technician, helps a youth put on their life jacket before paddling on the Mississippi River. Service photo.



St. Mary's University professor shares some of the fish caught in a net with paddlers. Service photo.

Erik Wrede, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Water Trails Coordinator explained, "Minnesota boasts the nation's first and largest Water Trails system so it was appropriate for us to establish a State Water Trails Day. Working with this group in Winona, Minn. has been a pleasure. These partners work well together and they all made this event a special occasion for the state."

Local youth and their families paddled out on the inaugural trip on the "The Immortal River" trail named in memory of local professor Cal Fremling, author of the book with the same name. A special pin was crafted to commemorate this occasion. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's, America's Great Outdoors Coordinator, Tamara McCandless commented, "Seeing

the mayfly pin reminded me of the Department of Interior's response to input from public listening sessions held nationwide. The mayfly is an indicator of water quality and a strong theme from those sessions was ensuring healthy river revitalization efforts."

After a fantastic storm the night before and in the heat of the morning, over 100 folks enjoyed a paddle, with the mayflies of the Mississippi River.

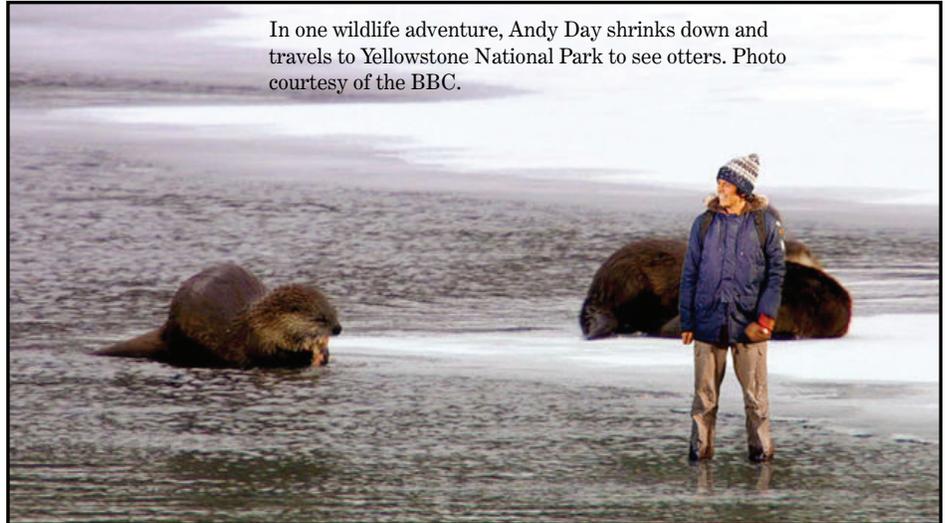
--Cindy Samples,
Upper Mississippi River NWR

Connecting Children with Nature: A World View

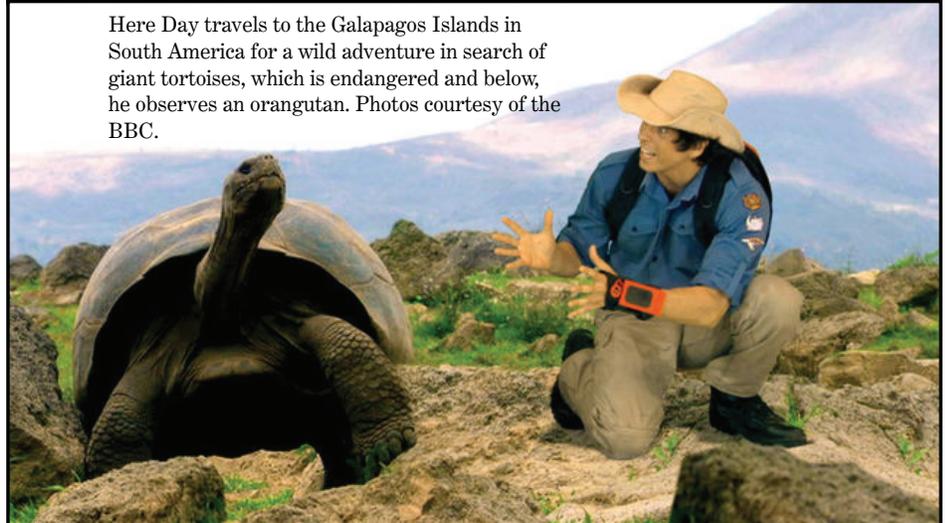
British Broadcasting Corporation's Kay Benbow

Kay Benbow, Head Controller of CBeebies, British Broadcasting Corporation's pre-school children's channel, is making noteworthy conservation headlines with her content selections. Her programming decisions note that the future of conservation begins with an educational component. To engage the minds of very young children, education paired with entertainment is crucial to engaging young minds. Partnering with the BBC's Natural History unit, the worldwide leader in wildlife and natural history programming that produced the award winning documentaries, "Blue Planet" and "Frozen Planet," Benbow's decision making speaks to the notion that conservation is a global issue and that children most certainly must be a part of that.

Not so long ago, the focus of conservation efforts in the United States, much like the marketplace was a national one. Today, both have opened to globalization. Planetary issues such as changes in climate and animal migration patterns, disappearing pollinators, contamination, human population growth and the acidification of our lakes, oceans, rivers and streams, all of which are interconnected, deem it so. All forms of life on the planet are being impacted by these issues, but especially the newer ones. Our children are the most vulnerable to global conservation issues and problems. The decisions made today will impact them the most tomorrow. The natural world, public health, and the environment are at stake. "I'm particularly passionate about the very young," Benbow says, "cause I think if you give children the very, very best when they are very small, then it gives them an expectation of what's good, what's quality."



In one wildlife adventure, Andy Day shrinks down and travels to Yellowstone National Park to see otters. Photo courtesy of the BBC.



Here Day travels to the Galapagos Islands in South America for a wild adventure in search of giant tortoises, which is endangered and below, he observes an orangutan. Photos courtesy of the BBC.



Connecting Children with Nature: A World View

British Broadcasting Corporation's Kay Benbow

Uneducated decision making based on lack of connection to the natural world will undoubtedly have ramifications, as author, Richard Louv has noted in his book, "Last Child in the Woods." The education of future generations, who are the future constituents, voters and decision makers are key to our conservation future. That's why Benbow's work is so critical.

Awarded the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award (BAFTA is analogous to the Emmy Award) for children's channel of the year for two consecutive years, Benbow's bold and innovative programming moves have clearly paid off. "Andy's Wild Adventures" is one of the avenues that has attributed to her amazing success. The preschool wildlife series opens up a whole new world for young viewers in a unique way. By utilizing green screen technology and archive footage from the BBC's Natural History Unit, the series host, Andy Day, races around the world to vividly interact with animals of all types, many of which are endangered. In one wildlife adventure, Day shrinks down and

travels to Yellowstone National Park to watch otters. In other episodes, Day observes a Chacma baboon and travels to the Galapagos Islands in South America for a wild adventure in search of giant tortoises. "What's so lovely [is] because you're featuring animals from all over the world," Benbow illuminates, "you're opening up all the different areas to the pre-school audience." The series which coincides with the 50th anniversary of Children's Natural History Programming in 2012 also has an online offering, both have been enormously successful. "There's such a lot for them to take in. I think that's also why it repeats so well," she says. "And because you have a web offering for them to go to as well, it gives them the opportunity to explore and take in facts. And hopefully be inspired to go and find out more."

CBeebies has several other nature based shows, commissioned by Benbow including, "Mr. Bloom's Nursery." Also wildly successful, the series features actor, Ben



Above: Kay Benbow was awarded the BAFTA for children's channel of the year for two consecutive years. The BAFTA is on par with the Emmy's in the United States. Photo courtesy of the BBC.

Faulks, a happy gardener who helps children to get in touch with and get inspired by nature with the help of smiling vegetable puppets.

Benbow understands the impact that exposure has on the young mind. She says that children's programming is brilliant and that the impact of quality programming is tremendous. At age three, she remembers connecting with a series in the United Kingdom called "Play School," the first color children's television series on the BBC, which influenced her greatly. "I just remember sitting watching it and thinking it was for me. It wasn't for my mom it wasn't for my dad, it wasn't from my gram, it wasn't for adults. It just connected with me."

--Valerie Rose Redmond,
External Affairs



Mr. Bloom (Ben Faulks) poses with his garden celebrities. Photo courtesy of the BBC.



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