



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

February 2010

Common Interest: The Future of Our Workforce



Common Loons.
USFWS Photo by Gary J. Wege, TCFO.

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:

USFWS Photo by Gary J. Wege, TCFO.

Departments

RD's Corner / 3

Around the Region / 19

Features



The Future of Our Workforce / 3

The RD addresses aging workforce issues.

By Tom Melius



Conservation Resources Alliance Awards / 14

Service employee receives Outstanding Agency Partner award.

By Mark Holey



Career Development Programs / 11

Service and partner career development programs are reviewed.



Virtual Career Fair/ 6

Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge explores a virtual career fair.

By Tim Haller

The Future of Our Workforce

A statistical picture of America's workforce, particularly that of the government, shows increasing numbers of employees nearing (or at) their eligible retirement age. Concurrently, the pool of younger candidates poised to fill these vacancies continues to shrink. The loss of knowledge and experience through normal attrition has always been a concern for both private and public employers. But for government agencies where more than half of the workforce is either at or near retirement age, the impact takes on more urgency. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), reflecting these same demographics is feeling the effects as well. The government and subsequently, the Service is on the cutting edge of this issue.

Adding to this demographics shift is an attitude shift. The changing world is accelerating the need for a strategic workforce approach. Young people entering the workplace view their careers differently than those who entered the workplace 20-25 years ago. The sense of permanency that workers once entered the workforce with is less prevalent. The perspective of younger workers is less static and more fluid based on personal career goals, employer benefits and the economy.

In the face of these challenges, I am quite optimistic. While these changing demographics are a challenge and will have an impact, they also present a tremendous opportunity.

To mitigate this impact in the Service, workforce mentoring is key, as is our ability to embrace innovative solutions. I am grateful to our employees who have been willing to step out and explore new possibilities. Last fall, Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge Biologist Wedge Watkins and Biological Aide, Emily Magrowski, attended a virtual career fair at Lincoln University in Missouri (page 6). Equally impressive is Service employee participation in the Federal Outreach and Leadership Development Program (FOLD) whose mission is to identify and assist in the development of future federal executive leaders. (Inside Region 3 – July 2009).

I applaud programs like the Leadership Pathways program and the Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP), which is the Service's program to recognize and further develop high performing GS-13 and GS-14 employees who demonstrate willingness and capability for senior leadership positions.

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) have proved effective as well, as evidenced by the many promising new Service employees like Wildlife Biologist Jeramie T. Strickland of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife & Fish Refuge and Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge's Ken Schimp, both of whom have come out of the programs (page 7-9).

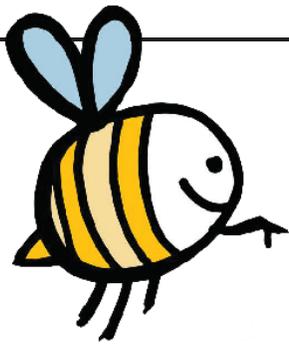


Enhancing employee ability to take advantage of job swap, detail and cross-training opportunities has also proved valuable in helping the Service carry out its mission.

This kind of succession planning and talent management is a key strategy for addressing these issues and helping us to move forward as an agency. As the Service continues to identify effective strategies to meet this demographic challenge, recognize that the next generation of workers will build upon the work that you have already done.

The mission of the service is inextricably tied to these demographics. It is our responsibility to coach and mentor employees to be the best they can be by pushing them to take on new challenges.

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



Where There Is Help, There Is Hope

The Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) is to be commended for their hunger-relief efforts through their partnership with Second Harvest Heartland, the largest hunger-relief organization in the Upper Midwest. The 2009 silent auction sponsored by

Jackson, received a heartfelt thank you from the Director Dawn Marie Nelmark and the Events Manager, Heidi Yankovec. Both expressed appreciation and commented that the partnership has helped them to achieve their mission to end hunger through community partnerships. For more information about the organization visit Second Harvest Heartland visit their website: <http://www.2harvest.org/>.

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs



Above: Regional office employees browse the wares at the silent auction. USFWS Photo.

OLE raised \$1121.40 for Second Harvest Heartland. This donation equates to 4,037 meals for those who are most in need. Despite difficult economic times, Second Harvest Heartland distributed 40% more food than last year. Special Agent in Charge, Gregory



Above: Fish Biologist Jaime Masterson placing the sac fry into an indoor tank. USFWS photo.

Pendills Creek National Fish Hatchery welcomed their newest arrivals on January 19, as our Seneca Lake trout eggs hatched. On January 20, the sac fry was moved to indoor tanks, where it will remain until June, before being moved to outdoor raceways. Again this year well water is being used, which runs at a constant 45° temperature. Due to complications last year we were unable to use strictly well water, which is a warmer and cleaner water supply. Well water will help boost the growth of the sac fry and get it on a healthy track for becoming next year's production fish.

--Jaime Masterson,
Pendills Creek NFH

Job Shadowing A Valuable Experience

During November, University of Missouri student Dylan Spruance job shadowed Technician, Colby Wrasse, of Columbia FWCO. Spruance was interested in experiencing field work on the Missouri River and also interested in fulfilling a class requirement.

During the day Spruance was with us, we ran gill nets as part of the Pallid Sturgeon Population Assessment Program. He got to experience the life of a deck hand as he picked fish, pulled in gill nets, weighed and measured fish, and did all the other dirty jobs expected of a field crew member. Although no pallid sturgeon were captured that day, we did capture several shovelnose sturgeon and other interesting native fish.

Job shadowing and volunteering in the natural resources field is important for students as they decide on their future careers plans. These experiences give students a realistic, up-close view of the field. Most times students love the experience, and it serves as additional motivation. Some students, however, learn that this isn't the right career for them and it gives them time to change directions. Either way, volunteering and job shadowing is usually an insightful experience.

We hope that Spruance got something out of his day on the river, and Columiba FWCO looks forward to continuing to work with the University of Missouri.

--Colby Wrasse
Columbia FRO

CELEBRATE CONSERVATION THROUGH THE ARTS!



The **Junior Duck Stamp** is produced by the **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service** to recognize the conservation efforts of young people while supporting environmental and conservation education programs in the United States.

The stamp design is selected from a national art contest administered by the **Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program**. The contest is the culmination of an arts-based educational program, in which students draw, paint or sketch a picture of an eligible North American waterfowl species depicting their newfound knowledge of waterfowl anatomy and habitat. This program provides intense experiences in the observation and study of waterfowl species as it strives to connect kids to nature and conservation through art and science in the belief that students are more likely to conserve and protect that which they love.

Students K-12! Go to www.fws.gov/juniorduck/entrypacket.htm/ for information on entering the contest.
Teachers! Jumpstart your artists today with the free curriculum available at www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/curriculumguide.pdf/. Another supplement providing fun and important background information on the contest is also available at www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/2003centennialcurriculumguide.pdf/.

Stamps are available at local National Wildlife Refuges, Post Offices (www.usps.com) or the Amplex Corporation (www.duckstamp.com)!

**BUY YOUR JUNIOR DUCK STAMP AND SUPPORT AMERICA'S
NEXT GENERATION OF LAND STEWARDS!**

Big Muddy NFWR Participates in Virtual Career Fair

Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge (NFWR) Refuge Biologist, Wedge Watkins and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) Biological Aide, Emily Magrowski, attended the second annual Virtual Career Fair at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Mo. The career fair was hosted by the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. The Department of Environmental Sciences Activity Coordinator, Annette Driver came up with the idea for a “virtual” career fair because she wanted to find a meaningful way to give students exposure to the potential employers and employment opportunities that their education was preparing them for.

This year, forty potential employers (vendors) had tables and booths displaying information and equipment. Federal agencies participating at the event included the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(Service), U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Natural Resource Conservation Service. Several state agencies, private corporations and graduate schools were also represented.

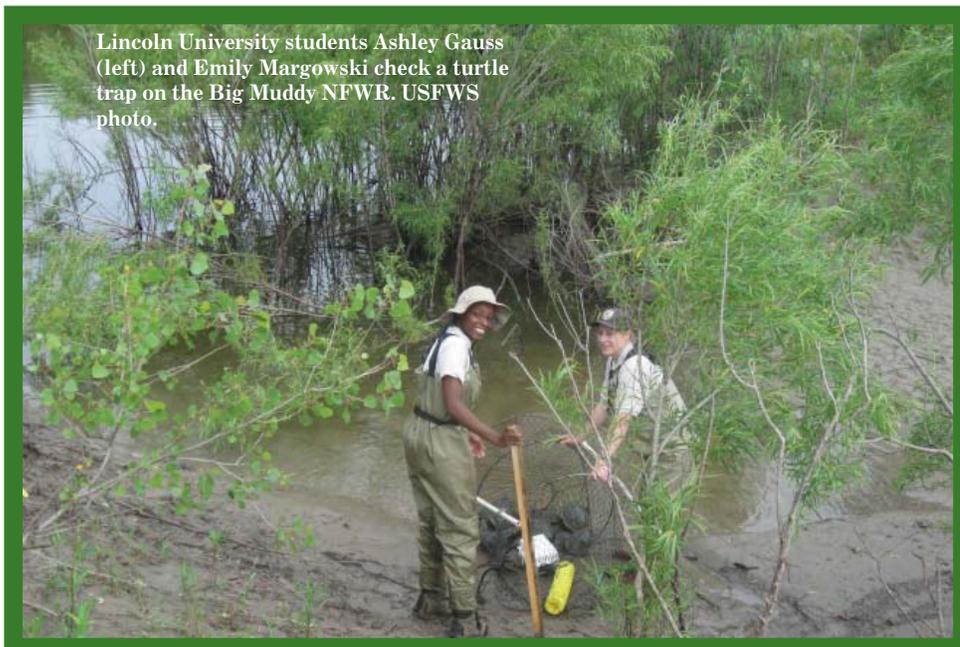
Two hundred and seventy five students attended this year’s event. Prior to attending the career fair, students were advised to dress professionally and bring a current resume. According to Annette Driver, student participation increased this year, and the feedback from students and vendors has been extremely positive.



Above: (L to R) Langston Simmons and Roderick Alfred (U.S. Forest Service), Annette Driver (Lincoln University), Tim Lopez (Missouri DNR), Alvis Mar (NPS), Dr. Karyl Patten (Meharry Medical College), Darryl Driver (Attorney) and Wedge Watkins (FWS) at the Virtual Career Fair hosted by Lincoln University. USFWS photo.

The benefits to the Big Muddy NFWR have been positive as well. Watkins attended last year’s career fair and was very impressed by the quality of the students that he met at the event. The refuge had two Lincoln University students on staff in 2009. Emily Margowski (environmental science) was hired as a STEP and Ashley Gauss, (biology) was selected for one of the conservation internship program (CIP) positions. “At this year’s event, I talked with over twenty students who are interested in learning more about the Service’s STEP, SCEP and CIP opportunities”, Watkins said. For information about Lincoln University, including its history visit: <http://www.lincolnu.edu>.

--Tim Haller; R3-Big Muddy NWR



Lincoln University students Ashley Gauss (left) and Emily Margowski check a turtle trap on the Big Muddy NFWR. USFWS photo.

FCIP Program Highlighted in Service Employee's Road Map to Success

Early exposure to scientific opportunities is a proven pathway to attracting underrepresented employees to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Born and raised in Chicago, Ill., Wildlife Biologist, Jeramie Strickland, found his way to the Service in May of 2009, after participation in the National Council for Science and the Environment's (NCSE) Campus to Careers (C2C) Program and numerous other career development programs.

The NCSE C2C program supports young professionals in their steps towards professional careers in the new green economy through paid internships, fellowships and other short-term positions with federal agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses. Strickland says he found the program, through NCSE program coordinators. He is enthusiastic when asked about internship opportunities. "This internship is like a dream come true. In fact, it was not a job," he says. "I got paid to play, have fun, and help different animal and plant species that are threatened and endanger of becoming extinct in the future if we (the people)



Above: Strickland and High School Research Assistant, Alma Salas place a radio transmitter on an ornate box turtle. They are tracking ornates to analyze habitat use and movement patterns. Photo by Jeanine Refsnider of Iowa State University.

don't step in and act quickly and responsibly."

Strickland who manages an Illinois and Iowa state listed-threatened Ornate Box Turtle head start, nesting biology, conservation, and population recovery project at the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Savanna District), is the product of numerous career development programs and early exposure to ecology. In the eighth grade he won numerous science fair competitions while presenting his research that analyzed the affects on alcohol of the heart rate of several microorganisms. He attended the Chicago High

Left: Strickland holds an arrowhead plant during a multi-agency effort to sample aquatic vegetation on the Mississippi River. USFWS photo by Brian Stemper.



School for Agricultural Sciences (CHSAS) and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal & Poultry Science from Delaware State University.

Strickland's career path is jam-packed with internship and research positions with various organizations and universities including, the Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources at Delaware State University (DSU), the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA, Michigan State University, and Purdue University. He also performed conservation and biodiversity research in Namibia, Africa.

Before starting in the Ecology and Evolutionary Program (EEB) at Iowa State University, he was student coordinator of the SEEDS program for the Ecological Society of America (ESA). "My

Continued on next page.

FCIP Program Highlighted in Service Employee's Road Map to Success

position with ESA deepened my interest in ecology and solidified my decision to pursue a graduate degree...”, he says. Strickland earned his M.S. degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) from Iowa State University where he studied spatial and temporal dynamics of depredation of Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*) nests.

Strickland is the first Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) intern in the Midwest region. The FCIP program, spearheaded in the Midwest by Former Regional Refuges Chief, Nita Fuller, is a hiring flexibility that can be used by federal agencies to hire employees. Executive Order 13162 established this program in 2000 to attract to federal service exceptional people and prepare them for careers in public service. Hiring managers can hire candidates to fill a two-grade interval positions with a 2-year exceptional service appointment. For more detailed information on the FCIP contact human resources.

Strickland says he could not have made it to where he is today without the support of



Strickland assists with the rescue of an injured immature bald eagle. Photo by Kathy Walls.

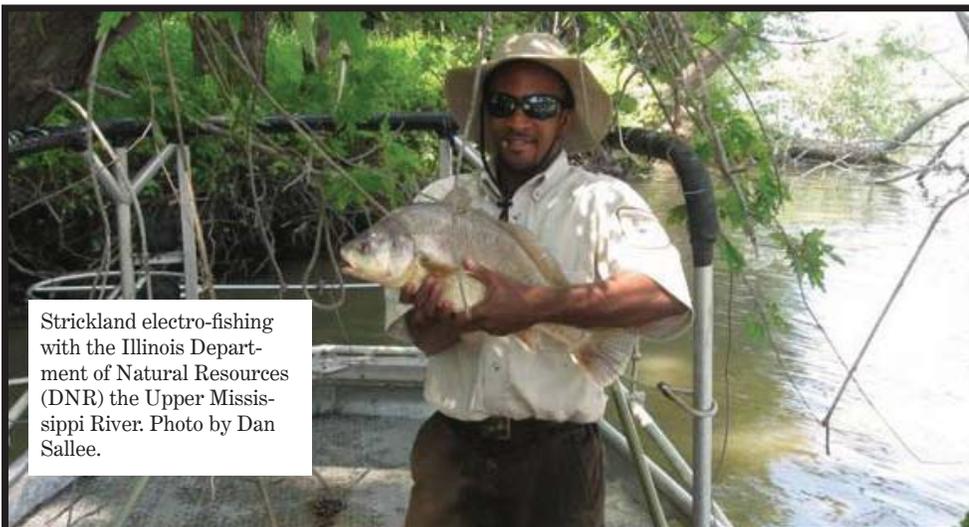
his mentors: Mr. John Davis (lifelong mentor), Dr. Richard Barczewski (undergraduate advisor and mentor, Delaware State University), Dr. Fred Janzen (graduate advisor and mentor, Iowa State University), and the Ecological Society of America. “It takes mentors like these to help attract and retain minority students in biology, ecology and related fields,” he says.

Strickland says he wants to help seal the leaks in the diversity pipeline by recruiting and helping to retain more underrepresented students in the field of ecology and biology. “Coming from a community where drugs and violence negatively affect most children and families, I hope that upcoming youth can be influenced by my career path and stay on the right track,” he says. “I want to inspire those who are going through difficult times so that they can become successful and a valuable asset to the community they serve”.

While Strickland is the first FCIP in Region 3, he is hopefully not the last. “The key to utilizing any of the programs (SCEP, STEP, CIP, FCIP) is funding to field stations so they can recruit for these positions,” he says. “I feel that there can never be enough opportunities for students and young professionals. The more the better!”

Strickland’s work has helped seal some of the leaks in the ecology and biology diversity pipeline. He has been fortunate to receive grants to help expose underrepresented high school students to field biology with the goal of encouraging them to pursue biology-science degrees and careers.

“I am the first in my family to pursue a science career and degree,” Strickland says. “Fortunately, they have been very supportive throughout my career. I would not be where I am today without the thorough support of my family, friends, mentors, and community.” --Valerie Rose Redmond, *External Affairs*



Strickland electro-fishing with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the Upper Mississippi River. Photo by Dan Sallee.

SCEP Program Ushers in a New Maintenance Worker at Shiawassee Refuge

Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge welcomed Ken Schimp as the new maintenance worker last October. Schimp comes to Michigan from the Savannah District of the Upper Mississippi National Fish and Wildlife Refuge where he was a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) employee. He participated in two Maintenance Action Teams at Necedah and Two Rivers Refuges. He has U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) certification for tractor, grader, dozer, backhoe, and excavator operation.

Schimp is originally from Eldorado, Ill. He graduated from high school there and attended John A. Logan College in Cartersville, Ill. Afterwards, he studied construction management for two years while at John A. Logan and was involved with a class building project at Crab Orchard Refuge in Marion, Illinois. While working on this project at Crab Orchard, Schimp became acquainted with the refuge manager and who told him about the SCEP program with the Service. In 2008 Ken became enrolled as a SCEP employee.

Shiawassee Refuge has a tremendous amount of infrastructure that Ken will play an integral role in preserving. In fact, the refuge has a total Real Property Inventory value of more than \$47 million, including 35 miles of dike, 20 miles of road, 13 miles of trail, 53 miles of boundary, 20 large water control structures, six permanent pumping stations, 10 buildings, 11 parking lots,



Above: New Shiawassee Refuge employee Ken Schimp. USFWS Photo by Edward P. De Vries.

a boat launch, two observation towers/platforms, three photo and observation blinds, and a multitude of signs, gates, kiosks, and smaller assets. Further, the refuge has a long list of equipment items to maintain, including an excavator, bulldozer, backhoe, grader, tractors, boats, dump trucks, fleet of vehicles, ATVs, farm implements, and much more.

Schimp will contribute to a maintenance program that helps all refuge programs operate. Indeed, the maintenance program is critical for the refuge to execute its wildlife first mission and its primary purpose as a sanctuary for migratory birds.

--Steve Kahl
Shiawassee NWR

Gun Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities

Since 1994, Horicon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) has been hosting a disabled gun hunt during the nine day deer gun season in Wisconsin. After having the most successful hunt ever a year ago, this year's hunt was disappointing but consistent with statewide statistics. The harvest was definitely lower this year. Most hunters did not see a single deer. Out of a record number of 44 hunters this year for the disabled hunt, only three hunters bagged a deer. Two bucks and one doe were taken.

Six blinds were available for use in the 880 acre area, although the hunters were not restricted to the blind. Depending on their disability, some of them walked around, some used portable blinds and others hunted from their vehicle. Despite the poor success this year, the hunters all appreciated the opportunity and plan to try their luck again next year. --Diane Kitchen, R3-Horicon NWR

Sealing the Leaks in the Diversity Pipeline: An FWS Employee Perspective On Recruiting a Diverse Workforce

Professional Organization Utilization

I feel more funds and emphasis should be placed toward reaching out to minority serving communities. For instance, Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) is a national society that welcomes membership of people of all racial and ethnic groups who have interest in agricultural, natural resources, biology, and related sciences careers. MANRRS provides ongoing networking and professional development activities for its members.

The best opportunity for networking, and recruiting students of color, however, occurs at the Annual Career Fair and Training Conference, which brings together hundreds of culturally diverse students and professionals to discuss issues of interest and concern in agriculture, natural resource, environmental science, and biology-related areas. In addition to workshop sessions and keynote addresses by prominent individuals, the conference conducts a career fair where employers from agricultural and natural resources, and environmental science industries and the government meet with students

Below: Service Wildlife Biologist, Jeramie Strickland, helps out behind the booth at the University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Day. Photo by Aurelio Curbelo.



and young professionals to discuss volunteer, internship, and full-time employment opportunities.

There are more than 70 high school and university chapters in the MANRRS network. I have exhibited, presented, and served as a recruiter at this conference in the past with other partners. I am hoping to be able to attend again this year to help seal some of the leaks in the Service diversity pipeline. It is an ideal avenue for building a diverse, professional workforce, by acquainting conference participants with the Service. To learn more about MANRRS at the conference visit: <http://www.manrrs.org/>.

--Jeramie T. Strickland
Wildlife Biologist

Imagery: A Viable Tool

The upside of sealing a leak is the availability of tools to fix the problem. That said, the utilization of a concentrated formula is essential. When it comes to recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce, one element of the formula that is sometimes under utilized is imagery. Images draw people in. They resonate because they are eye catching. And because they resonate, images produce results.

But as in any targeted marketing strategy, some questions must first be answered. What is your audience interested in? What motivates them? What do they value? Where are they? Where do they search for jobs? The Service workforce recruitment audience is interested in among other benefits,

career opportunities, training, compensation, recognition, family friendly workplace benefits, and work environment. But what's key here is that diverse candidates may give more value and weight to one or more of these benefits than do their counterparts. One of these is work environment.

Are there people who look like me and have issues like me already working for this company? Are there people working for this company that I will have things in common with? A company can help answer these questions—through images.

Images in venues that diverse candidates frequent sends a message—an inviting one. When a candidate sees an image in a brochure or catalog or an advertisement that mirrors them, it catches their attention. When they see someone at a recruiting booth that looks like them, it resonates. When a press release with a catchy headline is issued, diverse audiences will note the catchy headline, but many times will stop and pay more attention if it also features an image that reflects something that they have in common with. Images speak volumes to distinct communities that are scoping for signs of representation.

An existing diversified staff is an in-house image asset that is sometimes underestimated and under utilized. The utilization of a diversified staff to recruit a diversified workforce is a tool that can produce viable results.

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs

Career Development Programs

Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) was designed to introduce talented students to the advantages and challenges of working for the federal government; to provide opportunities for students to combine academic study with on-the-job work experience; and to provide opportunities for students to earn money while continuing their education. This program includes positions in all occupational groups within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Job opportunities under this component offer temporary employment. Employment can range from summer jobs to positions that can last for as long as the candidate is a student. These employment opportunities need not necessarily be related to academic field of study.

Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)

The Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) was established to recruit high quality employees into the federal service, to support equal employment opportunity objectives, to provide exposure to public service, and to promote education. After working 640 hours

for the Service and completing their degree, SCEP students may be converted into permanent federal employees. These employment opportunities must be related to the student's academic field of study.

The Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)

The Federal Career Intern Program is a hiring flexibility that can be used by Federal Agencies to hire employees. Executive Order 13162 established this program in 2000 to attract to federal service exceptional individuals from a wide variety of academic disciplines and to prepare them for careers in analyzing and implementing public programs. Hiring managers can use this authority to fill two-grade interval positions, beginning at grade levels GS-5, GS-7, or GS-9. Individuals are appointed to a two-year exceptional service appointment, and after successfully completing an internship, may be eligible for noncompetitive conversion to a permanent position in the Service. Managers should contact their servicing HR specialist for more detailed information on the FCIP.

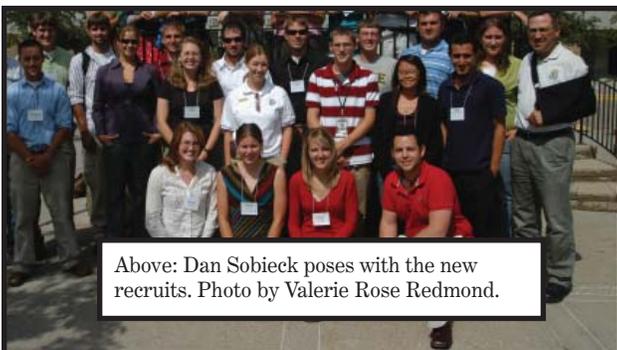
Stepping Up to Leadership (SUTL)

The Stepping Up to Leadership Program (SUTL) is a six-month long leadership developmental program for Service employees currently in grades GS-11 and GS-12. SUTL is designed for employees who have demonstrated by their performance

that they have high potential for assuming positions of increasing leadership responsibility. The goal of this program is to provide a cadre of skilled candidates to fill higher-level positions of increasing responsibility and other mid-level leadership positions as these positions are vacated through anticipated retirements over the next several years. Candidates for both classes in a given fiscal year are chosen annually through a competitive selection process.

Campus to Careers (C2C)

The National Council for Science and the Environment's (NCSE) Campus to Careers (C2C) Program supports young professionals in their steps towards professional careers in the new green economy through meaningful, paid internships, fellowships and other short-term positions with federal agencies, non-profit organizations and businesses. C2C is not a federal appointment, however. Dedicated to building a skilled "green" workforce, C2C's goals are two-fold. They foster and guide college students and recent graduates through the transition from school to work by exposing them to real world work experiences and career networking opportunities. C2C also provides mentoring to ensure participants receive a positive and educational experience. Positions range from field and lab research to policy analysis and education and outreach related to clean energy technologies, environmental services, sustainability, conservation and forest and wildlife management.



Above: Dan Sobieck poses with the new recruits. Photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.

Career Development Programs

C2C also works closely with employers in the rapidly growing green sector to find talented and dedicated young professionals, who will become the next generation of innovators and leaders. They actively recruit high quality candidates through NCSE's University Affiliate Program, a network of over 160 universities and colleges across the U.S.

The Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP)

The Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP) is for Service employees currently in GS-13 and GS-14 positions who have demonstrated, through their performance, that they have high potential for assuming positions of leadership at higher levels of the organization. All employees who meet these criteria are encouraged to apply for nomination to participate in the program.

The Goal of the Advanced Leadership Development Program

is for participants to explore leadership in the Service and to assess, learn about, and develop themselves as leaders. During the program, the Service will have opportunities to get acquainted with and observe these potential leaders as they develop and improve their leadership skills.

The Advanced Leadership Development Program is a vital component of the Service's overall leadership succession planning initiative. As attrition, retirements, and organizational change continue to unfold across the Service, there presently exists, and will continue to exist in the years ahead, the need for a highly trained and prepared cadre of employees who are ready, willing, and able to assume leadership roles that may require both geographic and/or programmatic mobility. While submission of a formal mobility agreement is not a specific application requirement, individuals considering application

to ALDP should do so with a full understanding of the leadership succession intent of this program. As graduates of ALDP, participants may encounter the important decision of geographic relocation or programmatic movement as the Service leadership acts decisively to meet our leadership succession needs.

Additionally, as potential emerging leaders within the Service, ALDP graduates' continued development may be assessed periodically after graduation as part of the Service's Emerging Leaders Program.

Federal Outreach and Leadership Development Program (FOLD)

The Federal Outreach and Leadership Development (FOLD) Program exists to identify and assist in the development of future federal executive leaders. The program identifies and assists in the development of future federal executive leaders necessitated by the retirements of the baby boomer generation.

This program was designed for people of the journeyman level who desire to increase their rank within the federal government. FOLD was specifically designed to inform these new leaders about the unique problems faced by the federal government in Minnesota. Through this program, participants will be introduced to a wide array of current leaders, current agencies and have the chance to participate in on-site visits. FOLD hopes to expose participants to the wide variety of people working within or with the federal government with the aim of increasing the knowledge of all aspects of the federal government. Participation in FOLD will also allow the participants a chance to improve their writing, speaking, and decision making skills, among other things.



Service regional employees received graduation honors for completing the Federal Outreach and Leadership Development Program (FOLD) at last year's Civil Servant of the Year. USFWS Photo.

Record Breaking Year For La Crosse Fish Health Center

The fiscal year of 2009 was a busy one for the La Crosse Fish Health Center (LFHC). They had a record setting year for case history numbers (258). A case history number represents a specific fish, group of fish, tissue samples, or a biological sample (virus, bacteria, or parasite) from a specific source such as a specific water body, or hatchery. Each case history number could represent anywhere from one to 500 fish. The LFHC receives samples from a multitude of sources.



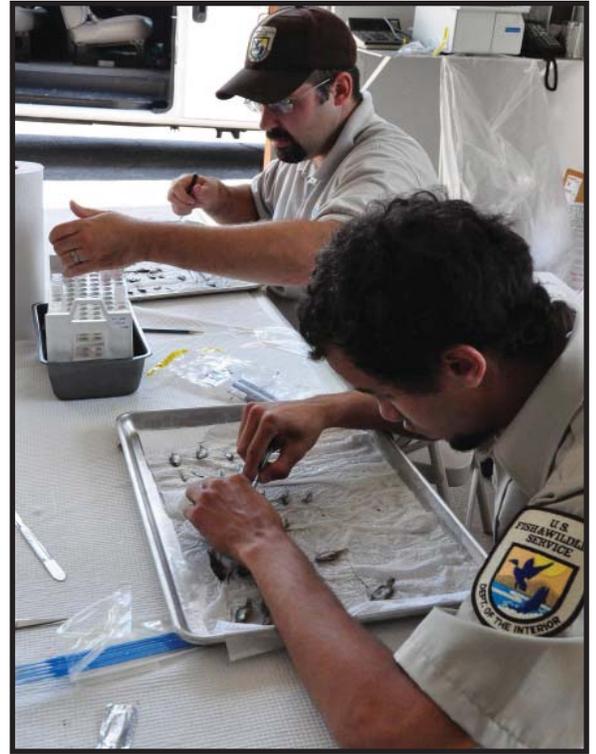
Above: Rebekah McCann (standing) and Emma Waffenschmidt (sitting) taking fish health sample during the Wild Fish Health Survey of Pool 4 from the Mississippi River. USFWS photo by S. Bauer.

The first source are the National Fish Hatcheries in Region 3. These hatcheries are the LFHC most important responsibility. The center conducts health inspections at these hatcheries twice a year. These inspections ensure hatchery fish are free of fish pathogens. Fish health responsibilities for the LFHC also include diagnostics, screening of spawning material, testing new brood stock, and technical support.

The hatcheries in Region 3 include: Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH), Iron River NFH, Pendills Creek NFH, Sullivans Creek NFH, Jordan River NFH, and Neosho NFH. Samples from inspections, spawning material, and diagnostics were taken from more than 6000 fish.

The LFHC also works closely with many states and their propagation facilities. Many states have limited laboratory space for the analysis of fish health samples. The center is contracted to give laboratory services of varying degrees to Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois. These states obtain the samples and overnight them to La Crosse. The LFHC lab processed samples from almost 3700 fish originating from state propagation facilities.

Many tribal hatcheries also depend on laboratory services from LFHC. These hatcheries receive an annual hatchery inspection, screening of spawning material, diagnostic support, parasite identification, and technical support from the LFHC. The participating tribal hatcheries include Keweenaw Bay Indian Fish Hatchery, Grand Portage Native Fish Hatchery, Red Cliff Tribal Fish Hatchery, and Lac Du Flambeau Fish Hatchery. Over 1000 samples were processed by the LFHC from the mentioned tribal fish hatcheries.



Above: Corey Puzach (top) and Lucas Purnell take fish health samples from sturgeon at Genoa National Fish Hatchery. USFWS photo by S. Bauer.

The last large sample source are fish from the National Wild Fish Health Survey. The survey started in 1996 to gain a better understanding of what specific pathogens were present in the wild, their distribution, and which species are affected by these pathogens. The survey depends largely on partner participation and this year was no exception. LCFHC received assistance with fish collection, fish transport, sample collection, and sample transport from 10 federal, six state, six tribal, and several academic organizations. Samples screened by the LFHC totaled nearly 9300 from the Wild Fish Health Survey. --Corey Puzach, Becky Lasee, Abby Purdy
LaCrosse Fish Health Center

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employee Receives Outstanding Agency Partner Award

The Conservation Resources Alliance (CRA) awarded Fish Biologist, Rick Westerhoff, of the Green Bay Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office with their Outstanding Agency Partner award at their biennial meeting in Traverse City, Mich.

The Alliance provided this award to recognize Rick as a community leader for his outstanding contributions to protecting world-class waterways, forests, and wildlife resources in northern Michigan. CRA Director, Amy Beyer said, "... we work with more than 200 individual state and federal agency professionals, and we truly have the cream of the crop in northern Michigan. Westerhof is receiving this award because he really stands out. He cares deeply about northern Michigan communities, and he empowers partners and people, whether they are professionals, volunteers, or landowners, to manage their own resources. Westerhof takes the



Above: Dr. Pat Kelley (L) from the Conservation Resource Alliance presents GBFWCO fish biologist Rick Westerhof (R) with their Outstanding Agency Partner award for his fish passage work in northwestern Michigan. Photo courtesy of CRA.

time to come and get to know local issues, concerns, and people on their turf."

Westerhof delivers the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service's) national fish passage program in the eastern basin of Lake Michigan and has partnered with the CRA on nine fish passage projects in the last two years that ranged in dollar amounts from \$10,000 to

\$55,000. Projects included culvert replacements, dam removals, engineering studies, a road stream crossing workshop, and an evaluation of dam removal options. The projects ranged from Antrim to Lake counties.

-- Mark Holey,
Green Bay FRO

Kids Ice Fishing Clinic

Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will host a Kids Ice Fishing Clinic on Saturday, February 6 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin, on the east side of the highway at Pond 9. The address is S5631 State Hwy 35.

Fishing poles will be available, if needed. Bait will be provided. Holes in the ice will be drilled prior to the event.

Lunch and hot drinks will also be provided.

For more information call:
608-689-2605.

Students “Reeled” In By Fisheries Course at Whittlesey Creek NWR

Students from Washburn High School’s Physical Education Lifetime Activities class stepped off their warm, dry school bus and stepped out into a cold, dreary morning at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center (Center), home to Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) headquarters. It was an unforgettable experience that no one will forget, especially two foreign exchange students from Germany and Columbia.

Grinning from ear to ear, the eager junior and senior students were dressed in several warm layers of clothing anxiously waiting to be informed about the day’s agenda. Students were divided into groups of five to create an intimate learning environment in and out of the Center. Groups were rotated to different stations to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in all the activities.

Dick Berge, vice president of Trout Unlimited’s Wild Rivers Chapter, instructed fly tying demonstrations. Students learned the art of fly tying and took home their prized possessions. They laughed and playfully debated who had the best fly as they proudly displayed their art work on their rain jackets, camouflaged baseball caps, and even their sneaker’s shoelaces. “I’m gonna’ catch a huge fish with my fly, you just watch,” shouted one confident young lady.

The Minnesota Conservation Corps instructed knot tying demonstrations. Students learned



A German foreign exchange student is all smiles at Whittlesey Creek NWR, even during inclement weather, as she fishes for the first time. Photo by Sheree Collins.

to tie several knots including the clinch knot, trilean knot, and modified clinch knot. They learned quickly and were having knot tying competitions before the session was completed.

Pam Dryer and Ted Koehler, from Ashland Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office instructed casting demonstrations outside where students had free time to bait, cast, and fish at the Center’s large pond. With semi-heavy consistent rains and mild winds blowing in several directions, the students laughed, screamed, and cheered for their classmates as they gladly continued to fish during the inclement weather and did not want to stop fishing when it was time to switch stations.

Mike Mlynarek, refuge biologist, instructed fillet demonstrations, which turned into one of the more popular stations. “Eww...this is so cool”, whispered one youngster,

nearly touching the fish with his nose.

Iron River National Fish Hatchery graciously delivered the trout for the course and was pleased to hear about the success of the course.

Kevin Lowry, visitor services manager, instructed anatomy and physiology as well as freshwater fish identification, which complimented all the other stations nicely. “Students also learned about the collaborative efforts between the refuge and its numerous partners,



Above: : Dick Berge, vice president of Trout Unlimited’s Wild Rivers Chapter, assists a Columbian foreign exchange student while a German foreign exchange student confidently smiles with her newly discovered talent of fly tying. Photo by Sheree Collins.

history of coaster brook trout, and the strategies involved, including habitat restoration and enhancement projects, to ensure the successful return of the coaster brook trout to its historical sites,” said Lowry.

-- Kevin J. Lowry, Whittlesey Creek NWR

An Urban Treasure: Hegewisch Marsh

A unique landscape in the State of Illinois, Hegewisch Marsh is located within the Lake Calumet area, an industrial area on the south side of Chicago. Historically, this was part of the Chicago Lake Plain, rich in wetlands, sedge meadow, sand forests and prairies. Hegewisch Marsh itself is a fragment of what remains of that once massive Lake Michigan coastal habitat. It has statewide significance and is recognized as an Illinois Natural Areas Inventory site due to the breeding activity of several state endangered and threatened species such as Common

moorhen and Yellow-headed blackbird.

Ultimately, Hegewisch Marsh was targeted not only for protection, but for a

restoration overhaul that would offer great educational opportunities for local citizens as well as long distance travelers.

A State Wildlife Grant (SWG) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service's) Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program helped begin the restoration process. On a regional basis, land acquisition dollars from SWG and other federal, state and local sources allowed the purchase of 700 acres of wetlands and open space in the region. Additional Service grants under the National Coastal Wetland Conservation program have also provided support for the project, including two NCWC grants totaling approximately \$1.2 million for ecological restoration work.

The restoration of Hegewisch Marsh has been invaluable to local residents, many of whom played on the site as children and care deeply about its care and restoration. More than 100 students visit each year - a number that will grow exponentially once the Ford Calumet Environmental Center is built. They and other visitors actively participate in planting vernal pools with native plants, planting native trees, and much more. Regular environmental education programs are connecting visitors with wetland ecology, flora and fauna, and the importance of preserving open space in urban areas in particular. Since most urban residents do not have the means to travel long-distance to our country's amazing national parks and reserves, this is an urban treasure.

Over 100,000 visitors are expected each year, with programs and exhibits tailored to showcase the unique connection between nature, industry and community - "coexistence" - and how we can learn from our past, assess current plans, and create a more sustainable future in urban areas like Chicago. Construction of the Calumet Environmental Center is proposed to begin in late 2010 and the entire project is expected to be complete in 2011.

A multitude of partners have provided technical expertise, funding, and labor to inventory native species that use the marsh, improve the wetland habitat for native flora and fauna, and engage students, volunteers, residents and other visitors in local restoration efforts.

Additional partners include the: Office of the then Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn, Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Field Museum, Southeast Environmental Task Force, Calumet Ecological Park Association, Illinois State Water Survey, Illinois Natural History Survey, Chicago Public Schools, and many others. --Ashley Spratt, *External Affairs*, Nicole Kamins, *City of Chicago Department of Environment*, Kathy Justison, *Illinois Department of Natural Resources*



16 Above: Project partners and local volunteers help with restoration efforts at Hegewisch Marsh, a natural area located in the south side of Chicago. USFWS Photos.

Team Approach Speeds Up Processing of 900+ Performance Plans

Year-end performance reviews are designed to give employees the opportunity to receive meaningful feedback regarding their performance and a chance to reflect on what they have accomplished for the year. Am I meeting my supervisor's expectations? Did I accomplish my goals for the year? Year-end performance reviews give supervisors the opportunity to review each of their employee's accomplishments for the year and provide recognition and identify any areas for improvement.

For Human Resources (HR), year-end performance time means never-ending piles of performance appraisals and awards that need to be reviewed, processed, and filed. Since the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is held accountable by the Department of Interior (DOI) to meet both policy requirements and strict processing

time frames, HR must do a thorough review of the documents and do it quickly. The volume of documents that HR processes is huge (900 plus performance plans accompanied by over 500 performance awards)!

For the 2009 performance year, HR used a new team approach to accomplish this task. Members of a team met three to five times per week for six weeks to review incoming appraisals and awards, complete data entry, process awards, and file. The main goal of this approach was to increase efficiency and maintain control of the substantial amount of paperwork involved in the process. However, due to the "team approach" concept, the turnaround time frame for processing the performance appraisals and awards was expedited and employees receiving performance awards received their awards

within approximately one to two days, versus weeks, of receipt in HR.

This process was also expedited by many supervisors turning appraisals in for their offices well before the established due date. HR would like to recognize the following offices for their 100 percent adherence to time frames and policy requirements: Biological Monitoring and Database, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Swan Lake NWR, Union Slough NWR, Iowa WMD, Division of Finance, Green Bay Ecological Services Field Office, Division of Migratory Birds, and Alpena Fisheries Resources Office.

--Katie Eull and Karen Schul,
Human Resources



Above: Mike DeGroot smiles files stacks of performance documents by the lektrier. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.

Whooping Cranes Arrive

Ten endangered whooping cranes arrived on their wintering grounds at the Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Citrus County, Fla. The other 10 ultralight-led cranes reached their final wintering destination at St. Marks NWR in Wakulla County, Fla. on January 13. These 20 cranes are the ninth group to be guided by ultralight aircraft more than 1,200 miles from Necedah NWR in central Wisconsin to the Gulf coast of Florida. The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), is conducting the reintroduction project in an effort to restore this endangered species to part of its historic range in eastern North America. -- *External Affairs*

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Investigates Wolf Killings

The Midwest Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service's) Law Enforcement agency is investigating 16 incidents of wolves killed illegally in November and December of 2009 in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Two wolves were killed in Minnesota, eight were killed in Wisconsin and six were killed in Michigan in the last two months of 2009. It isn't uncommon to see a spike in the number of wolves killed in the fall, according to Greg Jackson, special agent-in-charge. In Wisconsin, eight wolves were killed in late fall in Burnett, Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland, Adams, Monroe and Jackson Counties and on two Native American reservations. Four of the wolves were radio-collared by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR).

Two wolves were killed in Northern Minnesota in early November. One wolf was shot northwest of Grand Rapids, Minn., in the Ball Club area; the second was killed northwest of Two Harbors. The wolf killed near Two

Harbors had been fitted with a radio tracking collar.

Six incidents of wolves being killed were reported in Michigan's Upper Peninsula in December. All of the wolves were discovered after their radio collars began emitting a mortality signal. The dead wolves were found throughout the Upper Peninsula in Ontonagon, Iron, Menominee, Schoolcraft, Luce and Mackinac Counties.

The Service has a goal of conserving wolves in the United States, consistent with the intent of the Endangered Species Act. However, over the past decade Service decisions to reduce or remove protections for wolves in the Midwest have been legally contested. The most recent court action in 2009 once again placed wolves in the western Great Lakes under the protection of the Endangered Species Act. Wolves in Michigan and Wisconsin remain endangered under the ESA; in Minnesota, they are considered threatened.

Service biologists are currently conducting a comprehensive review of gray wolf recovery and conservation in the United States. This team is examining the way the gray wolf is listed under the Endangered Species Act and will make recommendations on how wolf populations in the lower 48 states should be covered by the ESA. The results

of the review will provide a road map for decision makers outlining listing issues and will provide an improved understanding of the wolf's conservation status in North America.

In the meantime, the Service is working with states and tribes in the western Great Lakes to address wolf depredation problems and other issues. In Minnesota, where the wolf is listed as threatened, the ability to address depredation has been written into the regulations. In Wisconsin and Michigan, where the wolf is listed as endangered, an Endangered Species Act permit is required for personnel to implement lethal control programs. State personnel may address depredation abatement using live-trapping and trans locating animals within the state, and they may kill individual wolves that are a demonstrable but non-immediate threat to human safety. In addition, any individual may take an endangered species in defense of human life.

The Service is investigating the wolf killings in conjunction with appropriate state agencies and tribal law enforcement and is offering up to \$1,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of persons responsible for killing wolves. In addition, non-governmental organizations are also offering rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of people responsible for killing wolves. The Humane Society of the United States is offering up to \$2,500 per case, and Defenders of Wildlife is also offering a reward. --*Georgia Parham External Affairs*



Wolves in the wild. Photo Credit: Corel.

New Website!

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Program has launched a new website for the Midwest Region! The address for the new fisheries website is: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Fisheries/>.



Above: New Fisheries website.

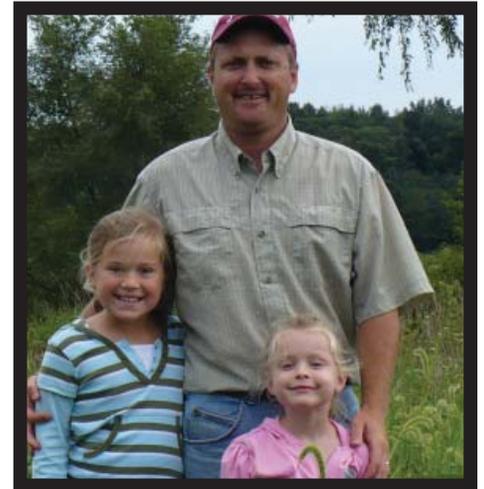
Fact Sheet on Lead Poisoning in Wild Birds

This fact sheet was developed to provide current knowledge and increase awareness about lead introduced into the environment through hunting, shooting sports, and fishing and its detrimental effects on wildlife, particularly scavenging raptors. It is available for download at http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/fact_sheets/pdfs/lead_poisoning_wild_birds_2009.pdf.

Hard copies of this fact sheet are available upon request. Please send an e-mail request to gmrogall@usgs.gov.

Medical Alert Card for Wildlife Professionals

Because biologists working with wildlife may be exposed to a variety of disease agents, NWHC developed a wallet-sized card that wildlife professionals can carry with them to alert medical personnel about the potential increased risk for exposure to zoonotic diseases that wildlife professionals face. Contact information is provided for the Centers for Disease Control for information on the occurrence of zoonotic diseases in humans. For more info visit: http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/outreach/wallet_card.jsp.



Above: Scott Fetters, who recently joined Region 3's Partners for Fish and Wildlife team, shows daughters Emilee(l) and Annie(r) a newly planted prairie project in Kosciusko County, Ind. They chased butterflies all afternoon while Dad made plans for the next habitat restoration project. USFWS photo.

Welcome Back Fetters

Region 3 welcomes Scott Fetters back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) as a Private Lands Biologist in the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Indiana. Scott worked for the Service from 1991-96 at the Bloomington, Ind. ES Office, restoring wetlands and grasslands throughout the state for what was then known as the Partners for Wildlife Program. Subsequent to that, he started a private consulting business, worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and most recently was employed by a private consulting firm in northern Indiana. He is stationed at a USDA office in Fort Wayne, Ind., supporting PFW efforts in the northeastern part of the state. --Georgia Parham, *External Affairs*

New National Wildlife Health Center (NWHC) of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) issues FACT Sheets

The NWHC recently developed two products that may be of interest to wildlife professionals: *Fact Sheet on Lead Poisoning in Wild Birds* and the *Medical Alert Card for Wildlife Professionals*.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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

February 2010

STEP Students Spend Winter Break Building Mussel Culture Cages

The Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) is the Fish and Wildlife Service's way to introduce interested college students to careers in conservation.

Genoa National Fish Hatchery has hired as many as three STEP workers in the last few years. These students typically work over the summer. Many people believe this program is only a summer program, however, the STEP program is a one year appointment, which means a student can work throughout the year, when available.

Genoa's current STEP students, Brandon Keesler and Sam Stafslie, are making the most of this opportunity by gaining fisheries experience while earning a little extra cash. Keesler and Stafslie spent part of their winter break

at the hatchery rehabbing mussel culture cages.

Mussel culture cages are used to house fish that have been inoculated with the parasitic larval form of mussels called glochidia. The glochidia attach to the gills of fish where they undergo a metamorphosis. When the glochidia

gins eye pearl mussel. They have produced over 35,000 two to four year old mussels that have been used in re-establishing five different recovery sites. The rehabilitation of these cages consists of some welding repair which is done by the hatchery maintenance staff. Afterwards, Keesler and Stafslie covered the cage frames with new hardware cloth. In

addition to the cages, rehab work was also done on the collection bases, on which the cages are attached and where the juvenile mussels settle out and grow. The plywood used in the collection bases was replaced as the original plywood was warped. With this rehab work completed, the hatchery now has 30 like new cages and

bases ready to be deployed this spring to culture a new cohort of freshwater mussels that in years to come will be used to reestablish mussel population in the Upper Mississippi River watershed.

--Tony Brady, Genoa NFH



Above: Sam Stafslie working during his winter break from UW-Stevens Point. USFWS photo.

complete their metamorphosis, they drop off the fish and many will settle into the collection base where they will grow and then are harvested for relocation to restoration areas. These cages have been used with great success for the past eight years in the recovery efforts for the endangered Hig-

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