



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

July 2013

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

1 800/344 WILD

**People with hearing impairments
may contact the Service via the
Federal Information Relay System
at 1 800/877 8339**

**Tom Melius • Regional Director
Midwest Region
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/>**





*You can follow the
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service on:*

facebook.com/USFWSMidwest



flickr.com/photos/USFWSmidwest



twitter.com/USFWSMidwest



youtube.com/USFWS



Surrogate Species Selection Continues With Help From Our Friends

The Fish and Wildlife Service is on a steady and adventurous trek down the path of identifying surrogate species and I'm pleased to note that our recent meeting on the subject with our state partners was productive.

The meeting included representatives from 10 states, in other words, 20 percent of this nation's state-level partners who will help us continue to move ahead with our work. This effort has provided an opportunity to discuss and learn from each other about the surrogate species approach. I know that our learning will continue.

The process we've begun is one that certainly takes time, but one that we expect will yield a "Version 1.0" of our regional approach to implementing surrogate species by the end of the year. We will take special care that our work and processes inform and engage all of our state, tribal and other partners. Throughout this, I applaud each of you for remaining engaged and offering your best to continually ensure success and to learn lessons as we forge further ahead.

We have recently transitioned to a new model of working with our tribal partners through the establishment of three new zone Native American liaisons within the region. Through this model we hope to better serve the interests of our tribal partners and enhance existing relationships. In this month's issue, you'll read of the success of three of our tribal partners in receiving more than \$595,000 in Tribal Wildlife Grants for 2013 (see page 12).

We're also tending to the waterways this time of year which we believe will result in even greater success down the road with another good year of sea lamprey control treatments. The hard work of our Fisheries program field staff can only further our fruitful efforts toward lake trout restoration in the Great Lakes.

We also expect to benefit from the increase in the return of fish tags from our mass marking work. Read the story on page 14 about the recently completed efforts for this year from our Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab. Returns of these tags result in better information than ever before in the hands of our managers who work with our partners to make important fisheries management decisions in the Great Lakes.

That is just a small slice of a plethora of outstanding work going on in the field, and I again want you to know how deeply it is appreciated. As you each work through your own repetitions of the processes and procedures in your daily work, also remember that safety is paramount. You are our most valued asset to accomplishing the great things that we do and I can't stress enough the need to use good common sense and the safety skills and knowledge we are reminded of each year in our training.



Tom O. Melius

Tom Melius
Regional Director, Midwest Region

Enjoy this month's issue of Inside Region 3!



Inside Region 3

July 2013

In this Issue



Rock Island's Mike Coffey Among National Recovery Champs 4



Port of Dubuque Marina Receives Boating Infrastructure Grant 5



American Burying Beetles Find a Home in Missouri 6



Iowa Man Sentenced for Stealing Walnut Trees from Federal Lands.... 7

Fixing Connections Between the Great Lakes and Tributaries 8

Midwest Conservation Projects Approved for NAWCA Awards 9

Outfitting and Deploying the Ultimate Sonar Boat..... 10

Tamarac's North Country National Scenic Trail Unveiled 11

Midwest Tribes Receive FY2013 Wildlife Grants 12

Boy Scout Leader Recognized for Wisconsin Conservation Work..... 13

Great Lakes Fish Lab Completes 2013 Chinook Salmon Tagging 14

NiSource Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan Finalized..... 15

Gray Wolf Proposed for Delisting Nationwide..... 16



On the Cover

The remains of a 40-inch diameter black walnut tree, estimated to be at least 140 years old. Randall Walker cut the tree down, but due to the large size could only remove one log, estimated at \$1,400 market value. Photo courtesy of Hill/USACE

Rock Island's Mike Coffey Among National Recovery Champs

By Georgia Parham
External Affairs

Every year we recognize outstanding people nationwide whose efforts have helped endangered and threatened species on the road to recovery. This year, 61 individuals from around the country were recognized as Recovery Champions, and among them were the Midwest Region's Mike Coffey and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources plant ecologist Nancy Sather.

Service biologist Mike Coffey, who works out of the Rock Island Ecological Services Field Office in Illinois, was recognized for his efforts to conserve freshwater mussels in Iowa and Illinois. Throughout his 20-year career, Mike has led efforts to improve water quality, identify mussels affected by contaminants, and support efforts to reintroduce mussels into cleaner waters.

His activities have resulted in mussel population increases, research breakthroughs, increased

public awareness, support for conserving the species, and improved landowner actions and relationships.

Also honored with a Recovery Champion Award was Nancy Sather, a plant ecologist with our partners from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Nancy has been a major figure in the recovery of endangered and threatened plants in Minnesota and the Midwest region for over 20 years. She has had key roles in developing recovery plans for at least three federally listed plants – western prairie fringed orchid, prairie bush clover, and Minnesota dwarf trout lily.

Nancy is a member of two recovery teams, and has served as recovery team leader for western prairie fringed orchid for more than 15 years. She has also coordinated one of the most ambitious endangered plant monitoring programs in the United States.

"We are proud of these endangered species heroes



Service Biologist Mike Coffey (pictured here) and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Plant Ecologist Nancy Sather were among 61 people nationwide honored as Recovery Champions. Melody Coffey, USFWS

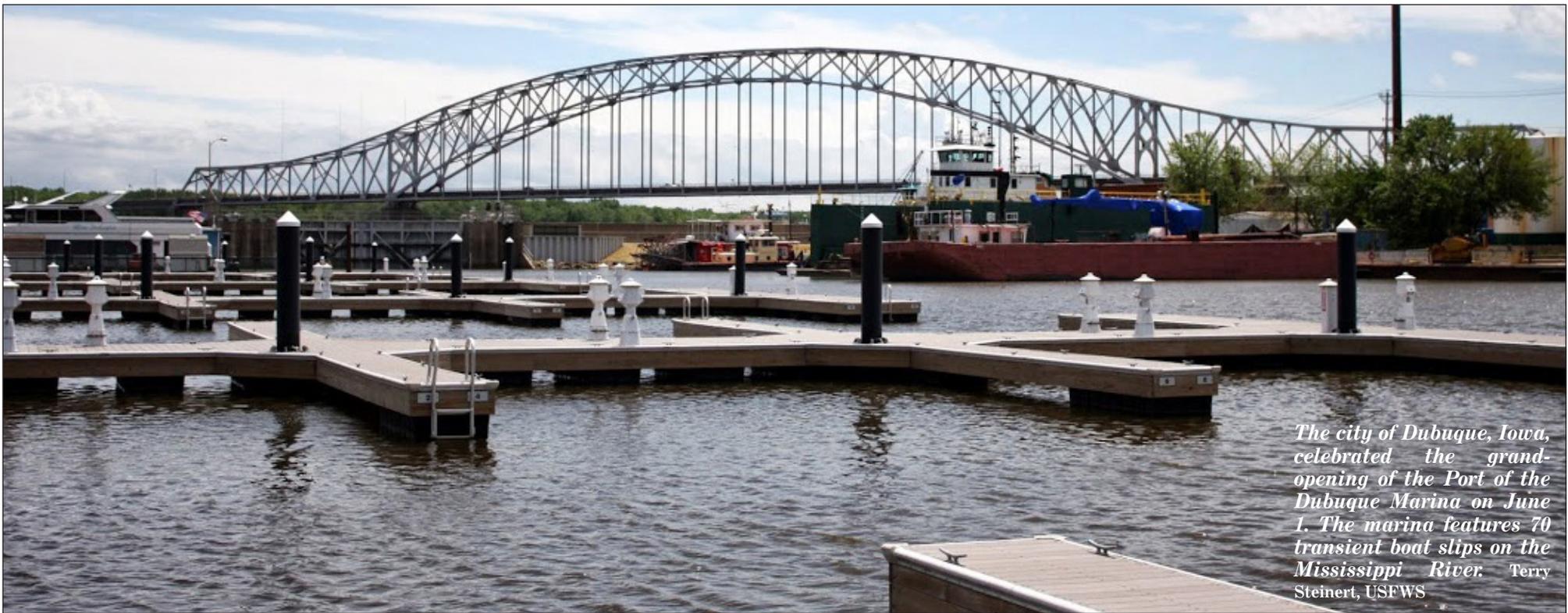
in the Midwest," said Tom Melius, Regional Director. "Nancy's work and keen field observations have revealed key aspects of the life history of rare plants, ensuring that actions we take to conserve these species are effective. And Mike has shown an enthusiastic and never-ending commitment to recovering endangered

mussels – species that are important indicators of the health of our own environment."

The *Recovery Champion* awards began in 2002 as a one-time recognition for Service staff members for their achievements in conserving listed species. However, in 2007, the program was expanded

to honor Service partners as well, recognizing their essential role in the recovery of threatened and endangered species. 🦋

For information about the Recovery Champions, please visit: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/recovery-champions/index.html>.



The city of Dubuque, Iowa, celebrated the grand-opening of the Port of the Dubuque Marina on June 1. The marina features 70 transient boat slips on the Mississippi River. Terry Steinert, USFWS

Port of Dubuque Marina Received Largest Boating Infrastructure Grant in History

*By Joanna Gilkeson
External Affairs*

On June 1, the city of Dubuque unveiled its newly completed Port of Dubuque Marina Project with a public ribbon-cutting event. The marina project was supported by the Boating and Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the city of Dubuque.

Dubuque received a BIG grant of \$3,037,802 for the project, making it the

largest grant ever awarded to a public or private entity under the BIG program. The project totaled \$4.1 million with the city of Dubuque committing \$1,088,950 of local funds to the project.

The Port of Dubuque Marina features 70 transient slips for boats of greater than 26 ft. along the shores of the Mississippi River. The ribbon cutting ceremony was also hosted by the National Mississippi River

Museum and Aquarium to celebrate the opening of the Museum's Mississippi Plaza in conjunction with the grand-opening of the marina.

Each state in the U.S. receives a baseline amount of grant funding from the BIG Program called Tier I funding. In addition to that, private or public entities can apply for additional funding through the BIG Tier II competitive grants. The city of Dubuque submitted

an application for the Tier II competitive grant, which they received in 2006 for this project. The project has been in the works since then and was completed in time for the 2013 boating season.

The Port of Dubuque is well stocked with amenities for recreational boaters including water and electrical connections, a fuel dock, sanitary pump-out facilities, and two shore entry/exit locations with

ADA-compliant access. In addition, there are dockside shower suites, restrooms, a laundry facility, and a ship store.

The Marina is part of America's River Project, which was launched through a partnership between the city, the state, and private enterprises. The project aims to create the finest tourism attraction along the Mississippi River. The Port is bordered by Dove Harbor to the north, which is fairly

industrial and Ice Harbor to the south, which is home to much of the recreation on the river. The Port of Dubuque Marina will be the gateway to America's River Project which hosts several major tourism components along the harbor including an aquarium, a resort and waterpark, a brewery, and two casinos, among others.

Dubuque is expecting that the addition of this marina will generate many local, regional, and national benefits, both recreationally and economically. A study conducted by the city found that existing private marinas were not meeting demand for the transient boat community along the Mississippi. In addition, the Iowa Welcome Center in Dubuque had been receiving 20-30 requests each month in the summer for a transient boating facility. The city expects that the development of this marina along America's River Project will attract visitor markets from the markets of Chicago and Milwaukee, encourage more transient boating opportunities along the river, and strengthen Dubuque's tourism industry as it is estimated

that the marina would be filled 10-12 weeks in the summer.

The BIG Program is managed through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program. The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program efficiently and effectively administers grant programs and works with fish and wildlife agencies in a mutually responsible, cooperative and creative grant partnership to protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and habitat resources for present and future public benefit. 🐾

American Burying Beetles Find a Home in Missouri

*By Scott Hamilton
Columbia Ecological Services
Field Office, Missouri*

Efforts to bring the endangered American burying beetle back to Missouri got a double boost this spring. For the second time in as many years, the Service and our partners reintroduced the colorful beetle at Wah-kon-tah Prairie in the southwest part of the state.

Partners including the St. Louis Zoo, Missouri Department of Conservation, The Nature Conservancy and the Service's Columbia Ecological Services Field Office released more than 300 pairs of adult beetles in holes with bird carcasses that serve as a food source for larvae.

Last year's release was deemed a success, and this year, just before the 2013 reintroduction, surveyors found an unexpected bonus: an unmarked adult female. The fact that this beetle's wings were not notched indicates she is the offspring of one of the beetles



This female American burying beetle was discovered this year and is one of the first offspring of reintroduced beetles in Missouri from 2012. She's also believed to be the first overwintering offspring of reintroduced beetles in mainland North America. Photo courtesy of Art Leverenz, St. Louis Zoo

reintroduced in 2012. She is believed to be the first offspring of reintroduced American burying beetles to overwinter in mainland North America.

All in all, it's been a good couple of years for American burying beetles

and the partners working to recover them.

[Click here to learn more and view a slideshow of the 2012 reintroduction.](#) 🐾

Iowa Man Sentenced to Jail for Stealing Walnut Trees from Federal Lands

By Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Randall Todd Walker, a 50 year-old resident of Des Moines, Iowa, was sentenced, May 9, to 15 months imprisonment for cutting and removing 32 black walnut trees from property under the control of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced U.S. Attorney Nicholas A. Klinefeldt.

U.S. District Judge John A. Jarvey also ordered Walker to serve three years of supervised release following incarceration. Additionally, Judge Jarvey ordered Walker to pay restitution in the amount of \$56,225 and to pay a \$100 special assessment for the Crime Victims Fund.

“We take things like this very seriously and work to preserve and protect our federal resources for the enjoyment of the public. Anytime a theft occurs we will work to prosecute those responsible to the fullest extent,” said Col. Mark Deschenes, commander of the Rock Island District



The remains of a 40-inch diameter black walnut tree, estimated to be at least 140 years old. Randall Walker cut the tree down, but due to the large size could only remove one log, estimated at \$1,400 market value. Photo courtesy of Hill /USACE.

of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Walker had previously pleaded guilty to removing the walnut trees from Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, which is under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, as well as from other property under the control

of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the following locations: the downtown Riverside area in Des Moines, Iowa; the Sycamore area, in Polk County, Iowa; and the Lake Red Rock area in Marion County, Iowa.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Office of Law Enforcement

Deputy Assistant Director Edward Grace was pleased at the multiagency and cross-programmatic collaboration on this case.

“This case took a lot of time, effort and excellent investigative work to gather evidence necessary for a criminal

conviction,” said Grace.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Bureau, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The case was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Iowa.

The Rock Island District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works in partnership with other federal and state agencies to manage and conserve natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing a quality public outdoor recreation experiences. [For more information about the Rock Island District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers visit http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil.](http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil)



Fixing Connections Between the Great Lakes and Tributaries Doesn't End With Dams

Research shows of more than 260,000 road crossings in the Great Lakes drainage basin, 64 percent may block fish movement

By Adam Hinterthuer, University of Wisconsin and Ashley Spratt, External Affairs

Over the last several years, federal and state agencies and environmental nonprofit organizations have targeted dam removal as a way to quickly improve the health of Great Lakes tributaries. Dams keep migratory fish, such as lake sturgeon, northern pike, and salmon, from swimming upriver to spawn, block movement of vital nutrients, and change the way water flows. For many, taking down a dam and returning a river to a more natural flow seems like a no-brainer.

In the study, published in the current issue of the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, researchers mapped every obstacle — from large hydroelectric dams to tiny road culverts — in the entire Great Lakes drainage basin. What the maps show is that, while there are more than 7,000 dams on the rivers, creeks and streams flowing into the Great Lakes, there are 38 times that number of road crossings — or 268,818, to be precise.

“Improving the connection between the Great Lakes and its tributaries is a high priority for a broad range

of conservation partners across the Great Lakes region,” said Brad Potter, science coordinator for the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Conservation Cooperative (LCC). “Different agencies and organizations have different roles to play, whether

“Maintaining large connected natural areas, and restoring severed connections is one of the primary priorities for our LCC community. This research is helping us identify the significant challenges related to fragmentation in our Great Lakes rivers and streams, and providing us the information necessary to identify the most cost-effective solutions to restoration.”

Stephanie Januchowski-Hartley

it's in-stream fish habitat restoration, dam removal or modifying road crossing to be more passable,” says Potter. The LCC community, which is providing funding for the University of Wisconsin-led study on aquatic connectivity, supports cross-jurisdictional, stakeholder-driven research that helps natural resources managers improve conservation efforts across broad landscapes.

Stephanie Januchowski-Hartley, lead author of the study with the

University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Limnology, says many road crossings are bridges with minimal impact on stream flow but field studies in the Great Lakes region suggest that 64 percent of the more than 260,000 road crossings

could at least partially block fish movement.

“If you're a state agency or a nonprofit group and you want to invest in river restoration and remove a dam, but you didn't consider that, upstream, there are thirty road crossings and half of them are impassable, then you have a problem,” says Januchowski-Hartley. “You did do some good [by removing a dam], but to be most effective, you should think about all barriers.”

“Many species of fish and wildlife require large areas to support their daily and annual activities,” Potter said. “Maintaining large connected natural areas, and restoring severed connections is one of the primary priorities for our LCC community. This research is helping us identify the significant challenges related to fragmentation in our Great Lakes rivers and streams, and providing us the information necessary to identify the most cost-effective solutions to restoration.”

Many fish want to head as far upstream as possible to spawn in small tributaries during the spring. Taking a dam out of the main-stem river gives those fish more habitat to spend their adult lives in, but may not allow them to access preferred spawning habitat that's crisscrossed by roads.

Water often shoots through the narrow corrugated metal tunnels of a road culvert so fast that fish can't swim through. In steeper terrain, “perched culverts” essentially act like mini-dams, where water spills over a ledge into the stream below. Unless those fish are high-jumping salmon, any little ledge may be an obstacle. Januchowski-Hartley hopes having these maps available for state

(continued next page)

agencies and nonprofit groups will offer a “big picture” perspective on improving river access for migratory fish species.

Besides, she says, it’s less expensive to replace a road culvert than remove a dam. “In this region of the world, it seems like just about every road gets re-done in the spring,” she says, noting that there is ample opportunity to re-engineer a crossing that better fits a river or stream.

In addition to funding this research, the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes LCC serves as a venue to coordinate vested stakeholder efforts to improve connections between the Great Lakes and their tributaries, while consider all the potential impacts of in-stream barrier removal or retention. Many organizations and partnerships including the Council of Lake Committees, Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies, American Fisheries Society and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies are involved in providing guidance for site specific actions to restore severed fish movement pathways. The LCC is working toward development

of a coordinated, Great Lakes wide approach to ensure the cumulative effects of all such actions are considered.

To read the full published article, visit <http://www.esajournals.org/doi/full/10.1890/120168>.

For additional LCC funded research on aquatic and terrestrial connectivity, visit <http://greatlakeslcc.org/projects-assessing-terrestrial-and-aquatic-connectivity/>.

The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes LCC is among 22 similar partnerships that collectively form a national network of land, water, wildlife and cultural resource managers, scientists, and interested public and private organizations—within the U.S. and across our international borders—that share a common need for scientific information in conservation. For more information about LCCs, visit <http://greatlakeslcc.org>.



Sixteen Midwest Region Conservation Projects Approved for NAWCA Awards

By Valerie Rose Redmond

External Affairs

More than \$1 million in funding was recently approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to support 16 North American Wetlands Conservation Act proposals in six Midwest states. The 2013 NAWCA awards and the more than \$3.38 million in matching funds will help to protect, restore and enhance vital wetlands, including acquisition of acres of waterfowl habitat in Minnesota, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

“This funding is incredibly important to the Midwest,” said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius. “Habitat enhancement is part of our commitment to the American people. This year’s grants and matching funds will benefit hundreds of species in the Midwest.”

Ohio, the host state of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2013 Federal Duck Stamp Contest, received funding for three of the Midwest approved proposals, including:

Cooke Restoration – Pickerel Creek, Grantee: Ducks Unlimited, NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$215,264
This project will restore 58 acres of wetland and upland habitat in a priority landscape in northern Ohio. Work conducted through this proposal will also provide connectivity to over 500 acres of adjacent habitat. Three project partners, including one new corporate partner (Cargill, Inc.) will work together to accomplish project objectives.

ECOHO, Grantee: Zoological Society of Cincinnati, NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$33,050/\$35,875
This project will utilize NAWCA funds to restore approximately 24 acres of wetland habitat in Warren County, Ohio. Funds would be used to purchase and plant trees, other native plants and nesting structures for birds and bats.

Appalachia Ohio Wetlands, Grantee: Buckeye Hills RC&D, NAWCA funds awarded/match: \$75,000/\$108,884
This project will restore or enhance 438 acres of priority wetlands and associated uplands within the Wayne National Forest in southeastern Indiana. Wetlands infrastructure will be improved which will facilitate better water management, and invasive species will be controlled within the wetland basins as well on adjacent uplands.

The 16 projects funded this year in the Midwest Region will protect critical wetland and grassland habitat for migratory birds in the region, using a landscape approach with an emphasis on decreasing wetlands and adjacent uplands threatened by development and urban sprawl.

The NAWCA grant program is dedicated to the conservation of wetland habitats for migratory birds. Through the Act’s U.S. Standard grants program, 3,300 partners have been involved in 910 projects affecting more than 7 million acres of habitat. [Click here for a full list of awarded projects and for more information.](#)

Outfitting and Deploying the Ultimate Sonar Boat

By Philip Rogers
Carterville FWCO

Fisheries technicians can be pretty crafty when it comes to designing new sampling gear. We spend a lot of time tinkering with and thinking about ways to improve our gear so that we can better perform our jobs. Occasionally, a technician gets assigned to a project that really allows them to put their creative juices to work.

In late 2012 the Carterville FWCO was approved to build a new sonar survey boat to aid in the fight against Asian carp. This boat was to be built to accommodate existing DIDSON sonars by Sound Metrics, newly acquired split-beam sonar equipment by BioSonics Inc., and Side Scan sonar by EdgeTech. The task was to design a boat that would allow individual or simultaneous use of these sonars.

A quick trip to Michigan to examine a USGS research vessel gave us a good idea of what we would need

to deploy and effectively operate all of our sonar systems. We drew up some plans, put it out for bid, and ultimately Pacific Skiffs in Marysville, WA received the contract to build the



Biological Technician Jose Rivera monitors the computers during a sonar scan of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Brad Rogers, USFWS

recently named “Carpe See-um” research vessel. The vessel is a 26-foot, all aluminum boat with an 8-foot walk-through cabin sporting heat, air conditioning, and twin 150 horsepower Yamaha outboards. Brad Rogers, lead technician at Carterville, made a trip to Marysville in early winter 2012 to help design and layout the interior workspace along with all the gadgets that

would ultimately make up our new research vessel. Fitting a boat load (pun intended) of sonar equipment into this new vessel was not easy. In the end, we had fun creating a usable and efficient workspace that will be safe and comfortable for many hours of surveying ahead of us.

With the Carpe See-um begging to be set sail, it was time to learn how to operate our new equipment. BioSonics Inc. sent two employees to Carterville in May 2013 to conduct a two-day training session that included on-the-water training with our equipment. We

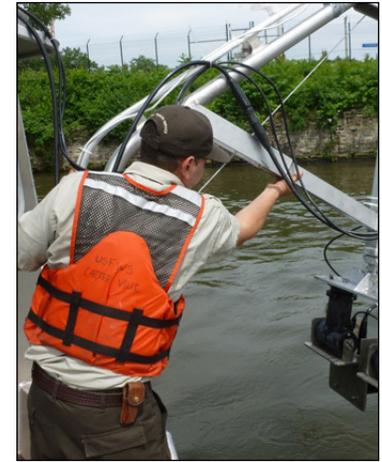


The “Carpe See-um” actively scanning a portion of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal with split-beam and side-scan sonars. Brad Rogers, USFWS

learned about the history and theory of split-beam hydroacoustics as well as the capabilities and limitations of the system we have. The on-the-water portion taught us just how critical deployment can be to collecting quality data. With this fresh knowledge we were ready to put the Carpe See-um to the test.

Jose Rivera and Brad Rogers, technicians at Carterville FWCO, headed to the Chicago area on April 1, to put the equipment to work. Their assignment was to make pre- and post surveys of the electric fish barrier, which is located in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, before and after a scheduled testing of the backup generators. The purpose of this survey was to document the abundance and location of any fish before and after the maintenance to determine if any fish move past the barrier during the testing.

In addition to this survey, the guys also performed



Biological Technician Jose Rivera deploys two split-beam transducers in preparation for a survey of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Brad Rogers, USFWS

a survey of the entire Lockport pool from just above the electric fish barrier down to the lock and dam. The purpose of this survey is to document relative abundance of fish in the pool over time. The information gained from these surveys will allow us to help plan maintenance activities at the fish barrier for times when the fewest number of fish are in the area.

The surveys went fairly well considering it was our first time using this equipment in the field without any

(continued next page)

expert supervision. We have since been attending more training as well as designing, modifying, and building mounts to better deploy the equipment.

The Carpe See-um is slowly turning into the “ultimate sonar boat.” All the kinks have just about been worked out and there are several weeks planned to be on the water this summer surveying miles of river. We have plans to be in Chicago on the Upper Illinois Waterway and possibly all the way over to West Virginia on the Ohio River. All the data we gather with this boat and equipment should provide us with plenty of information to aid in the fight against the Asian carp. 🐟

Partners help make the North Country National Scenic Trail a success. (from left) Regional Director Tom Melius, Superintendent of the North Country Trail Mark Weaver; Executive Director of the North Country Trail Association Bruce Mathews; Laurentian Lakes Chapter of the North Country Trail President Ray Vlasak; Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Manager Neil Powers and National Roads and Trails Coordinator Nathan Caldwell. USFWS

New Section of the North Country National Scenic Trail Unveiled at Tamarac NWR for National Trails Day

*By Tina Shaw
External Affairs*

June 3 was National Trails Day and it was fitting that Regional Director Tom Melius made the trek to Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge to celebrate.

With more than 2,500 miles of land and water trails across our refuges, waterfowl production areas and hatcheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to work with our conservation partners to get visitors outside and hiking. Working with the North Country Trail Association, the staff at

Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge did just that and unveiled a new section of the North Country Trail. They marked the occasion with a two-day celebration that welcomed both avid and new hikers alike to learn more through guided hikes, lectures and wildlife photography sessions.

“Trails like this are important to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service because they provide our visitors with a way to connect with something larger than themselves,” said Regional Director Tom Melius. Melius

continued, “Wildlife-based recreational opportunities like hiking, birding and photography are a priority for us, not just because they offer Americans a place to learn about the great outdoors, but because they offer us a place to relax and find a quiet moment away from our cell phones and computers.”

Volunteers from the Laurentian Lakes Chapter made this new 21-mile segment of the North Country National Scenic Trail a reality, along with the coordination and construction oversight from the North Country Trail Association and the National Park Service, who administers the trail.

The North Country National Scenic Trail is a 4,600-mile trail that journeys from the Adirondack Mountains of New York to the plains of North Dakota. The newly completed section in Becker County Minnesota runs from Greenwater Lake Scientific and Natural

Area south through Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge and is an extension a contiguous 150-mile segment heading north from County Highway 35 and then east to Itasca State Park and, ultimately, to Remer in Cass County.

This new segment in Becker County represents a significant advancement for the North Country Trail in Minnesota and is the result of the efforts of the Laurentian Lakes Chapter volunteers; two Legacy trail grants obtained by Becker County; and a great partnership between the North Country Trail Association, Becker County, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, two private landowners who host the Trail on their land, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

For more information about Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, visit <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/tamarac/> 🐟



Midwest Tribes Receive Wildlife Grants for FY 2013

By Joanna Gilkeson and
Carlita Payne, External Affairs

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Midwest Region announced funding in May for three Tribal fish and wildlife conservation projects totaling \$595,148 through the Service's Tribal Wildlife Grant Program.

Tribes that received funding include: Prairie Island Indian Community, the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, both in Minnesota; and the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi in Michigan.

Tribal Wildlife Grants provide assistance to Tribes for development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat. Activities funded through the program may include: planning for wildlife and habitat conservation, fish and wildlife conservation and management actions, fish and wildlife related research, habitat mapping, field surveys and population monitoring, habitat protection and public education relevant to the conservation project.

Since 2003, more than 360 projects -- totaling over \$60 million have been funded nationwide, to federally recognized Tribes through the Service's Tribal Wildlife Grant Program. These projects have made a substantial difference on the ground and have helped build capacity for Tribal management of culturally important fish, wildlife and plant species. 🐟



FUNDED PROJECTS

Conservation Restoration Area—Prairie Island Indian Community (\$200,000)

Activities in the project area include oak savanna habitat restoration, habitat connectivity improvement within the Mississippi River backwaters, recreational trail development with interpretive elements, cultural resource harvest plan development, invasive plant eradication, and wildlife monitoring and surveys. These habitat enhancement activities, guided by the Tribe's Comprehensive Conservation Plan, will restore rare native habitats and improve ecological functions in certain important areas, and benefit migratory birds within the Mississippi River flyway and the Vermillion/Cannon River Important Bird area.

Grand Kankakee Marsh Restoration—Pokagon Band of Potawatomi (\$198,148)

Actions under this grant will restore wetland and wildlife habitats at the Band's North Liberty Property in Indiana. Additionally, the public awareness component will provide educational, interpretive and cultural activities in support of fish and wildlife conservation. These activities complement the Band's long-range plan of restoring the Grand Kankakee Marsh's wetland and tall grass prairie habitats for habitat sensitive species, close to conditions prior to the mid-19th century's levee installations and drainage of the marsh to create new farmlands.

The Service received 108 proposals requesting a total of \$18.4 million in project funding this year. The proposals were reviewed by regional and national scoring panels and 23 projects totaling \$4,140,000 were funded. [More information on the projects funded is available at: http://www.fws.gov/home/newsroom/23nativeamertribeNR05232013.html.](http://www.fws.gov/home/newsroom/23nativeamertribeNR05232013.html)

Rehabilitation, Evaluation and Range Determination of Lake Sturgeon (Acipenser fulvescens) in the headwaters of the largest tributary to the Red River of the North in the United States—Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians (\$197,000)

Recent efforts made by Tribal, State, Federal, and private partners have assisted toward restoring lake sturgeon, a species that was extirpated from the entire Red River of the North Watershed by the 1950's. Actions under this grant include continuing the stocking program and implementing management activities that will provide additional baseline biological information, as described in the Band's 10-year lake sturgeon recovery plan. Information collected will assist with future management actions for 47,000 eventual reintroduced lake sturgeon fingerlings with as many as 20 different age classes. This multi-agency restoration effort of this significant species is both culturally and traditionally important to the Red Lake Band.

Boy Scout Leader Recognized for Service-learning Conservation Work in Wisconsin

By Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Wisconsin Congressman Sean Duffy recently recognized the conservation work of Friends of St. Croix Wetland Management District board member Greg Scheder with a commendation. The ceremony was held at Lakefront Park in Hudson, Wisconsin.

Instrumental in making the St. Croix Wetland Management District *Conservation Day on the WPA Program* a success, Scheder was the 2012 District Volunteer of the Year, as well as the Boy Scouts of America Hornaday Award winner.

“Greg is very deserving of the Hornaday Award and Congressional recognition,” commented St. Croix Wetland Management District Project Leader Tom Kerr.

“Greg’s efforts have resulted in scout involvement in habitat restoration projects across our District lands, but more importantly more than

500 scouts, parents, and local community members have come to appreciate their waterfowl production areas,” said Kerr.

The Hornaday Award is a great honor in the scouting world and recognizes a long-term commitment to conservation by adult volunteers across the country. The award highlights the influence that nominees have on youth and educational programs over a sustained period of time. Sound natural resources stewardship and efforts to improve environmental quality over a three year period are the foundation of this award.

Eagle River District Chair of the Northern Star Council Steve Wojan is very pleased that Scheder is being recognized, saying “All of the scouts and their leaders in western Wisconsin are proud of Greg and his recognition from the Boy Scouts of America as a recipient of the Hornaday Award.”



Conservation Committee Chair for the Northern Star Council Thomas Shaw, Wisconsin Congressman Sean Duffy, Friends of St. Croix Board Member Greg Scheder and St. Croix Wetland Management District Project Leader Tom Kerr take part in the day’s festivities. Chris Trosen, USFWS

The Eagle River District engages youth from across Polk, Burnnet, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in Wisconsin and the City of Hastings, Minn.

Scheder is a resident of Somerset, Wis. and has been spearheading the Scouts involvement in the Conservation Day on the WPA project. This service-learning partnership project with the Eagle River District of the Boy Scouts of America,

the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service St. Croix Wetland Management District and the Friends of the St. Croix Wetland Management District got real restoration work done and provided scouts with valuable life lessons. Conservation Day is a field day designed to introduce scouts of all ages to issues related to habitat restoration and invasive species management through field based interpretation and hands-on programs.

Over the course of three years more than 1,000 people have attended this event.

To learn more about the Hornaday Award visit: http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Awards_Central/WTHGoldBadge.aspx 

Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab Completes 2013 Chinook Salmon Tagging Season

By James Webster
Green Bay FWCO

On May 13, the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab concluded the third successful season of their 5-year Chinook salmon mass marking project.

Between March 12 and May 13, lab staff traveled to seven state-operated hatcheries in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana to coded wire tag and adipose fin clip 2.5 million Chinook salmon destined to be stocked into Lakes Michigan and Huron. An additional 360,000 Chinook salmon were marked, with the adipose fin clip only, and then stocked into Lake Superior.

The Chinook salmon mass marking project is a cooperative effort involving Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Each year, biologists from the lab use automated equipment to implant a coded wire tag in the snouts of all

hatchery-reared Chinook salmon and simultaneously clip the adipose fin.

The tiny coded wire tag is etched with a unique code that provides identification of the discrete hatchery group, and the adipose fin clip positively indicates that the fish has been tagged and is of hatchery origin. When an adipose fin clipped fish is recovered during agency assessment surveys or from angler interactions, the snout is collected and sent to the lab in Green Bay for tag extraction and reading.

Since 2010, more than 12.9 million Chinook salmon have been tagged and released in Lakes Huron and Michigan. In addition, during the same period more than 15,000 tags have been recovered, extracted and read at the lab.

The information recovered from coded wire tag returns will provide fisheries managers with the ability to accurately estimate levels of natural reproduction, and



to identify fish movement within and among the lakes, as well as the resultant contributions to regional fisheries.

In addition, the tag recoveries allow biologists to evaluate the health of the fishery by providing data on growth rates, age of the fish at the time of capture, and the evaluation of hatchery rearing and stocking practices.

The information provided by this project will allow Great Lakes fishery managers to continue making informed management decisions on stocking levels to insure the constant viability of the multibillion dollar sport fishery. [Click here to learn more.](#) 

The Automated Fish Tagging Trailer set up for coded wire tagging and adipose fin clipping of Chinook salmon at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Jake Wolf Memorial Hatchery. USFWS

2013 Chinook Salmon Tagged and Adipose Fin Clipped			
Agency	Hatchery	Number of Fish	Dates
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Jake Wolf	252,839	March 12 - 16
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Wolf Lake	232,625	March 13 - 16
Indiana Department of Natural Resources	Mixsawbah	170,016	March 18 - 20
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Kettle Moraine	118,295	March 25 - 27
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Wild Rose	696,265	April 2 - 16
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Platte River	978,638	April 17 - 24
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Thompson	47,537	May 8
Total:		2,496,215	
2013 Chinook Salmon Adipose Fin Clipped Only			
Agency	Hatchery	Number of Fish	Dates
Michigan Department of Natural Resources	Thompson	359,823	May 8 - 13
2013 Total Chinook Salmon Tagged and/or Adipose Fin Clipped:		2,856,038	March 12 - May 13

Summary of all 2013 Chinook salmon tagging and marking projects completed by the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Lab. USFWS

NiSource Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan Finalized

*By Georgia Parham
External Affairs*

In early June, the Service announced the availability of the NiSource's final habitat conservation plan, a multi-state habitat conservation plan developed in conjunction with an application for incidental take under the Endangered Species Act.

The plan was developed by NiSource Inc., a natural gas transmission, distribution and storage company, for operating and maintaining its network of pipelines in 14 northeastern, midwestern and southeastern states.

The habitat conservation plan covers activities in 14 states: Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

NiSource's habitat conservation plan covers the company's activities that may result in take of endangered

or threatened species along its pipeline network. The plan addresses conservation needs for 10 federally endangered, threatened or proposed species for which take might occur, along with measures to avoid take of an additional 33 federally endangered, threatened or candidate species.

NiSource's plan includes measures to avoid or reduce impacts on those species resulting from business activities, as well as mitigation practices such as protecting existing habitat, creating new habitat for protected species, and identifying research to better understand endangered species.

The next step in the process is a Record of Decision on the Environmental Impact Statement after a waiting period of at least 30 days, and a decision on whether to issue an incidental take permit to NiSource. These actions should be completed this summer.

[Click here to learn more about the NiSource habitat conservation plan, including a list of covered species and laands.](#) 



Indiana bats are among the species covered by the NiSource Habitat Conservation Plan.
Ann Froschauer, USFWS

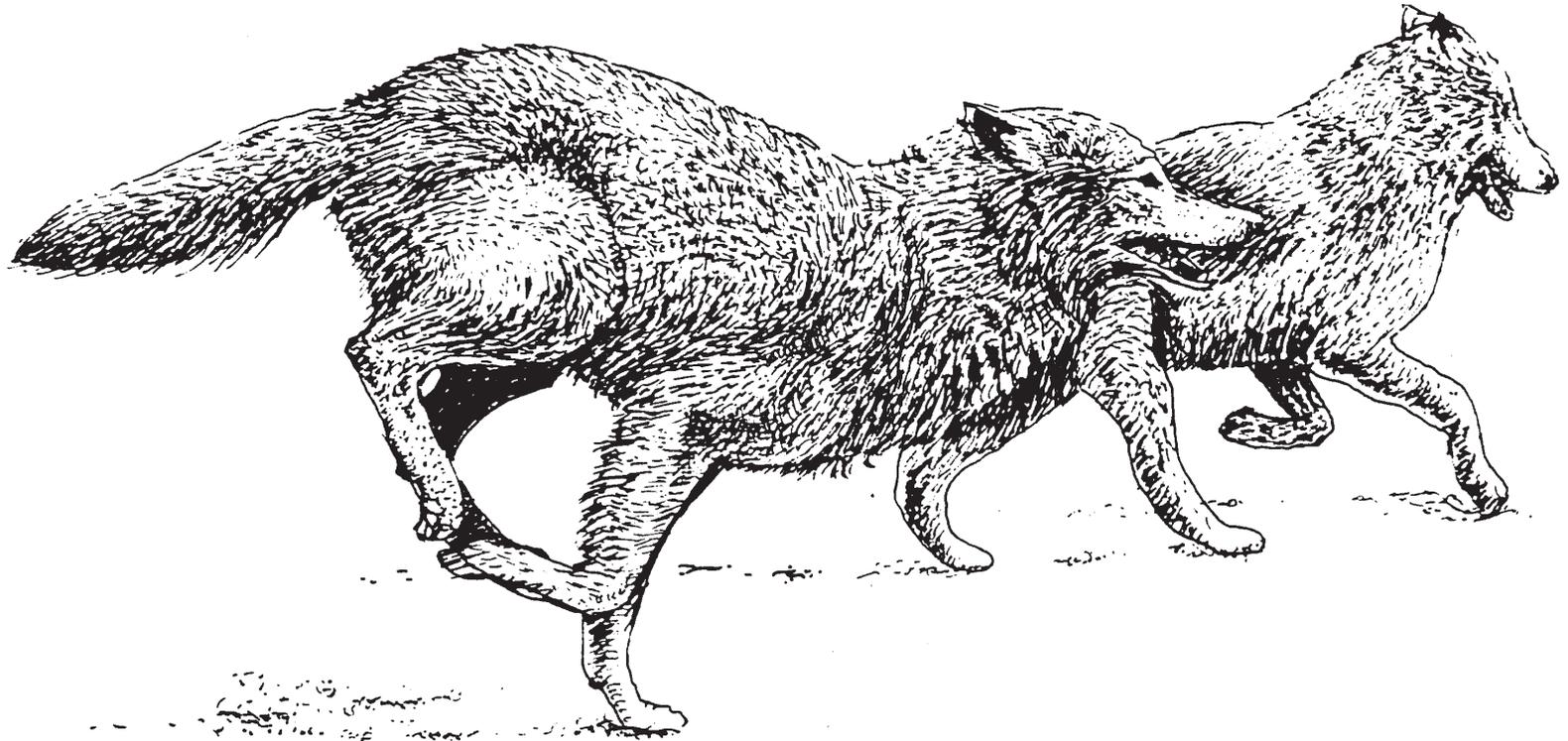
Gray Wolf Proposed for Delisting Nationwide

*By Georgia Parham
External Affairs*

The gray wolf has been an endangered species success story in the western Great Lakes and northern Rocky Mountains for several years. Now, the Service proposes to remove Endangered Species Act protection for gray wolves throughout the United States and Canada, with the exception of the Mexican wolf population in the southwest United States. The Service proposes to designate Mexican wolves as an endangered subspecies.

A comprehensive review of gray wolves in the U.S. determined that the current listing for gray wolf, which was developed 35 years ago, erroneously included large geographical areas outside the species' historical range. In addition, the review found that the current gray wolf listing did not reasonably represent the range of the only remaining Mexican wolf population in the Southwest.

Under the proposal, state and tribal wildlife management agency professionals would resume responsibility for



management and protection of gray wolves in states where wolves occur. It focuses the protection on the Mexican wolf, the only remaining entity that warrants protection under the Act, by designating the Mexican wolf as an endangered subspecies.

In 2002, the Northern Rocky Mountain population exceeded the minimum recovery goals of 300 wolves for a third straight year, and they were successfully

delisted in the Northern Rocky Mountains and Western Great Lakes in 2012. Today, there are at least 6,100 gray wolves in the contiguous United States, with a current estimate of 1,674 in the Northern Rocky Mountains and 4,432 in the Western Great Lakes.

The number of Mexican wolves continues to increase. Survey teams counted a minimum of 75 Mexican wolves in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico in 2012.

The Service opened a 90-day comment period on both proposals seeking additional scientific, commercial and technical information from the public and other interested parties. The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on June 13, 2013.

[Click here to read more about the proposal.](#) 🐾



The Service has proposed removing the gray wolf from the endangered species list throughout the United States; Mexican wolves, however, would be designated an endangered subspecies. Jim and Karen Hollingsworth, USFWS