



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

June 2014



RD Corner

Regional Visits

It's been a busy spring with visits from Secretary Sally Jewell, Director Dan Ashe and Deputy Director Rowan Gould. I had an opportunity to visit with the Secretary when she visited Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge in Iowa. I showed her the resources of the tall grass prairie and some of the species that we are trying to recover that depend upon that habitat. You can read more about her visit on page 10.

Director Ashe visited Chicago to plant trees as part of a new wildlife corridor and natural area in Chicago's Burnham Park. The effort was conducted as part of a partnership with the Chicago Ecological Service's Field Office, Chicago Wilderness, The Field Museum, Friends of the Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Openlands and Audubon – Chicago Region. While in Chicago, Director Ashe also met with representatives from the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity to discuss a partnership to provide opportunities for urban youth to experience nature and promote interest in conservation. You can read more about his visit on page three.

I also had an opportunity to visit with our Deputy Director Rowan Gould who came out to discuss the importance of science in the agency. While here, he visited the Whitney Genetics Laboratory in La Crosse, Wis. Construction of the Whitney Genetics Laboratory was supported by the President's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework. The lab uses environmental DNA (eDNA) water



Regional Director Tom Melius. USFWS photo.

samples for early detection of Asian carp. You can read more about his visit on page five. To learn more about how we are using eDNA in the fight against Asian carp, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/news/633.html>

Our region is fortunate to have received more than \$4.5 million in funding recently from the Wildlife and Sportfish Restoration Program's Boating Infrastructure Grant Program. Learn more about the projects funded on page seven. Speaking of boating, this is a time when people start recreating in and on our waters within the region. I implore

you to please remember the need to be safe as you are out recreating with friends and family this summer.

As always, it's an honor to witness all the great work happening in our region!

T.O.M.

Director, RD Help with Chicago Habitat Project

On May 10, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe and Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius joined the Chicago Park District and volunteers from around the Chicago Area to plant trees to develop the Burnham Wildlife Corridor, a new natural area in Chicago's Burnham Park. Staff from the Chicago Ecological Services Field Office, including project leader Louise Clemency, Mike Redmer and Shawn Cirton, helped coordinate the event.

The Burnham Wildlife Corridor creates a 100-acre ribbon of urban wilderness running through one of Chicago's premier lakefront properties. The corridor is located within the Millennium Reserve, one of two sites in Illinois to be included in President Obama's "America's Great Outdoors" initiative.

The event was conducted in partnership with Chicago Wilderness, The Field Museum, Friends of the Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Openlands and Audubon - Chicago Region.

During the event, Service Director Dan Ashe thanked participants and partners and said, "The Service is pleased to be a part of this project which connects Chicagoans with nature in such a hands-on and meaningful way. Providing habitat in cities along our Great Lakes will make a real difference in conserving our migratory songbirds."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided \$370,000 funding and technical support to the Chicago Park District for Burnham Wildlife Corridor habitat restoration along Chicago's south side lakefront via the Great Lakes Coastal Program through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding. The largest private contributor to overall



Regional Director Tom Melius, Director Dan Ashe, Mike Redmer, and Shawn Cirton helped improve habitat in Chicago's Burnham Wildlife Corridor. USFWS photo by Louise Clemency.

development of the Burnham Wildlife Corridor is CN railroad with \$150,000.

Take a look at more photos from the event at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/with/14170870194>

By Georgia Parham

Technology



Science Applications works with employees to foster and promote the science of conservation. USFWS photos.

Science Applications Launches New Webpage

Looking for information on landscape conservation, policy guidance on research and publishing, or resources on the Service and the conservation work that we do? Look no further! Science Applications recently launched a new webpage that helps users navigate the online universe of science resources provided by the Service.

The Science Applications program works with Midwest Region employees and partners to ensure that the necessary science tools and capacity are available for planning efficient and effective conservation actions. Thus, the new webpage will continually evolve

as information needs are identified and paired with available information resources.

Check out the new webpage at fws.gov/Midwest/science.

By Katie Steiger-Meister

Deputy Director Honors Midwest Region Staff

The Midwest Region's achievements are linked directly to the dedication and passion of its employees. On May 14, 2014 the Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rowan Gould, honored two of our exemplary colleagues at a Regional Office Town Hall meeting. Jean Collette from the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District was presented with the 2013 Administrative Professional of the Year award. Marianne Dahl, a secretary for ABA in the Midwest Regional Office, was recognized for 45 years of service. Midwest Deputy Director, Charlie Wooley, also recognized Pat Percy, IT Specialist, for 38 years of service. The region will miss both Percy and Dahl who recently retired.

The Deputy Director's Midwest Region experience continued on May 15 with a driving tour of the Upper Mississippi River. With Regional Director, Tom Melius, along with Wooley and Deputy Assistant Regional Director of Fisheries, Aaron Woltdt, as tour guides, Gould traveled south to our La Crosse Midwest Fisheries Center and our Upper Mississippi River National Fish



Deputy Director, Rowan Gould, watches Dr. Emy Monroe demonstrate how water samples are processed for eDNA at the Midwest Region's Whitney Genetics Lab in La Crosse, Wis. USFWS photo by Ashley Kast.

and Wildlife Refuge La Crosse District Visitor Center. Once in La Crosse, Wis., Gould had the opportunity to informally

meet with field staff. Highlights from the day included a tour of the new Whitney Genetics Lab, talking with field staff about their work, and a visit to the new La Crosse District Visitor Center, where he saw the first green buds of spring on the prairie.

The Midwest Region appreciates the opportunity to share our accomplishments with the Deputy Director. We look forward to his future visits and our next chance to demonstrate that the Midwest Region is committed to fulfilling the Service's mission in all the work that we do. Thank you to our staff who made the Deputy Director's visit fun and memorable!

By Katie Steiger-Meister



A highlight of the Deputy Director's visit to the Midwest Fisheries Center and La Crosse District Visitor Center was informal conversations with field staff. USFWS photo by Ashley Kast.

Recovery Champs

Service biologist Paul McKenzie and Adrian Wydeven, a biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources are the Midwest's 2013 Endangered Species Recovery Champions, honored for their work to conserve endangered bats and recovery of the gray wolf. McKenzie and Wydeven are among 55 champions across the nation.

"We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to these dedicated conservationists who are on the front lines fighting the battle against extinction," said Service Director Dan Ashe. "Their spirit and determination is the application of Aldo Leopold's counsel to 'keep every cog and wheel,' and they provide hope for all of us that our children and the generations that follow will be able to enjoy the same tremendous diversity of plants and animals that we do today."

Adrian Wydeven was honored for his work to recover the gray wolf in the Midwest. The Service recognized Wydeven for establishing, documenting, and managing the Wisconsin gray wolf population, resulting in the recovery of the species in the Midwest. Wydeven was acknowledged for creating an environment that allowed the wolf population to grow from 34 animals to more than 800 in the state.

Through a combination of management practices and innovative outreach approaches, Wydeven increased public awareness and social tolerance of wolves on the landscape, conducting education forums, hosting listening sessions to address conservation concerns, and leading workshops for volunteers on wolf ecology and wolf track identification.

"The Midwest Region Recovery Champions are truly outstanding examples of the skill and dedication needed to recover endangered species," said the Service's Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius. "Adrian Wydeven and Paul McKenzie have made invaluable contributions to wildlife conservation in the Midwest."

Paul McKenzie is recognized as a national expert in identifying birds, grasses, and sedges, as well as a

renowned author and coauthor of more than 60 peer-reviewed published papers. He was honored for his work with a range of imperiled species, including the endangered gray bat, Indiana bat and Topeka shiner; a small fish native to prairie streams. McKenzie's efforts to protect gray bats and Indiana bats from the effects of unwanted visitors—including the possible spread of deadly white-nosed syndrome at Bat Cave in Shannon County—resulted in installation of a



Above: Paul McKenzie was recognized for his work with endangered bats and the Topeka shiner, among many other accomplishments. USFWS photo. Below: Adrian Wydeven, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, was a key player in recovery of the gray wolf in the western Great Lakes. Photo courtesy of Adrian Wydeven.



Good News for Recreational Boaters: More than \$4.5 Million Coming to the Midwest

Recreational boaters received exciting news on May 7, 2014 when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced more than \$4.5 million in Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) program competitive grants to the Midwest Region.

Four projects including three in Michigan and one in Ohio will take home 33% of the total BIG funding being distributed this year. Nationwide, 10 states and the District of Columbia will receive a total of \$14.27 million in BIG program competitive grants. In a smaller non-competitive grant dedicated to boating infrastructure projects, the Service will also provide over \$2.4 million to 27 states, commonwealths and territories willing to match these funds.

“Anglers and boaters make these grants possible, helping communities build and enhance facilities that provide recreational opportunities while supporting jobs and economic growth,” said Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. “These funds pay for floating docks, fixed piers, mooring buoys, sewage pump-out stations and other infrastructure that benefits fish and wildlife habitat while providing access for outdoor recreation.”

The BIG program grants funds to the states to construct, renovate and maintain facilities with features for transient boaters (those staying 10 days or fewer) who pilot vessels that are 26 feet or more in length and are used for recreation. The states partner with local governments or private marinas to apply for these funds to improve the nearby recreational boating landscape. Grantees also may use funds to produce and distribute information and educational materials about the program and about recreational boating.

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The Skyway Marina in Toledo, OH was in part funded by the Boating Infrastructure Grant program. Photo courtesy of Ohio DNR.

The lasting impression of BIG program grants should not go unnoticed. BIG grants help to facilitate partnerships and working relationships between the states, local governments, private businesses, and recreational boaters. In addition, waterside communities see positive impacts as small businesses benefit from the economic impact of tourism from increased recreational boaters visiting the area.

Projects in the Service’s Midwest Region receiving competitive grants are:

Harbor Shores Transient Marina, Benton Harbor, Mich. – BIG grant: \$699,500; non-federal match: \$701,578; total project cost: \$1,401,078:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation will partner with a private development corporation to build the Harbor Shores Transient Marina on the St. Joseph River, which lies adjacent to the City of Benton Harbor. The project will create 33 new slips for eligible vessels, including all utilities such as electricity, water and pump-out services. In addition, the project will provide boaters with access to showers, restrooms and laundry facilities. The proposed marina is part of a larger

brownfield redevelopment effort which has transformed an industrial site into a successful mixed-use development providing an economic stimulus to the communities it serves.

State Harbor Dock Renovation, East Tawas, Mich. – BIG grant: \$1,300,000; non-federal match: \$950,000; total project cost: \$2,250,000:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation will remove, replace and expand boating infrastructure at the East Tawas State Harbor Dock. This existing facility is in need of repair and upgrades to meet ADA standards and to meet increasing demand from cruising vessels traveling Michigan’s Lake Huron between Detroit and Mackinaw City. The project will result in 52 slips with utilities, shoreline improvements and an ice suppression system. The facility also serves as a harbor of refuge and is a key economic driver to the City of East Tawas.

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Just A Walk In The Park

For some people, going the extra mile to make a difference is just a walk in the park. For Regional Payroll Coordinator Valerie Eastland, you can take that literally.

During break time, Eastland and Deanne Endrizzi from the Migratory Birds office, often go for a walk on the trail winding through the park between some natural and man-made ponds in an area between the office buildings at the Regional Office, in Bloomington, Minn.

“For the last three years since I’ve worked at this building, I’ve noticed all of the trash that washed up on the far end of one of the natural ponds. It is such a pretty spot except for all that trash. It bugged me. I felt like I needed to do something about it,” Eastland said.

She thought about trying to get a group together to do the cleanup, but time was running out before the tall grass and weeds would interfere, so she decided to take on the clean-up project herself. She got some trash bags and cleaned up the area on her own one day after work in early May.

“Most of the trash was plastic bottles and Styrofoam. I didn’t have time to clean up everything, but it looks so much better”, Eastland said.

Assistant Regional Director for Budget and Administration Chris Jensen said, “Valerie is yet another example of the conscientious people we have who care deeply and just go out and get things done, often without a whole lot of fanfare. By taking this project on herself, everyone in our building complex enjoying the hiking trail can see the beauty there, and not be bothered by any lack of maintenance.



Valerie Eastland in the park. USFWS photo.

She should know it is appreciated.”

A 31-year federal worker, 13 of those years with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Eastland added, “It’s just a small area. I know I can’t clean up the whole world, but I’m glad I could do my part to clean up a little piece of it.”

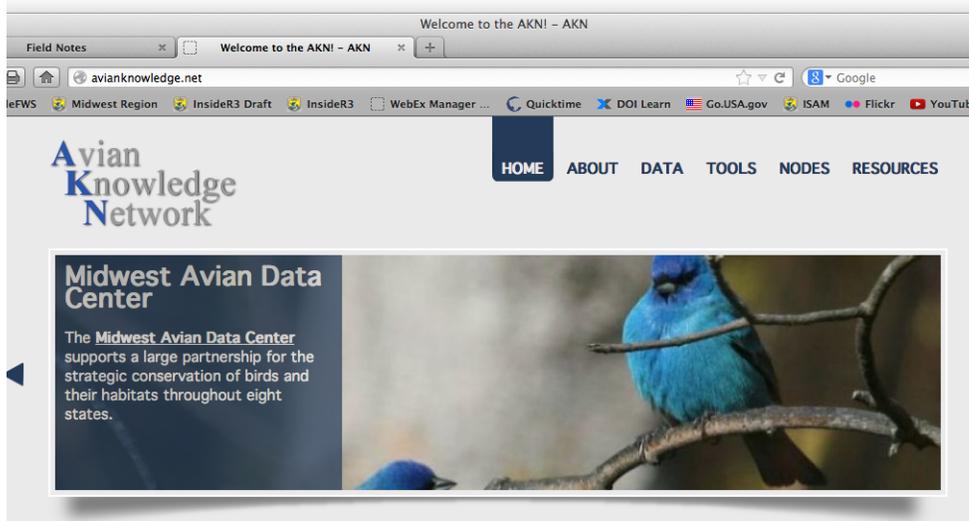
By Larry Dean



An after (above) and before (below) look of the hiking trail area. USFWS photo by Valerie Eastland.



Avian Knowledge Network Unveils New Website



WELCOME TO THE AKN!

The Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) is a partnership of people, institutions and government agencies supporting the conservation of birds and their habitats based on data, the adaptive management paradigm, and the best available science. AKN partners act to improve awareness, purpose, access to, and use of data and tools at scales ranging from individual locations to administrative regions (e.g., management areas, states, countries) and species ranges.

The following sections will help orient you to the AKN:

Partners - Discover the people and institutions that comprise the AKN.

Sponsors - Find out more about the funding sources that make the AKN possible.

Goals - Learn about what AKN partners are accomplishing.

[AKN Goals](#)

[AKN Approach](#)

[Get Involved](#)

News

- [Avian Knowledge Network website update](#)
- [New datasets added to MWADC](#)
- [The histogram tool got another booster shot](#)
- [USGS point count and marshbird databases to be available through the AKN](#)

Counts, have extended the capacity to capture monitoring data from other taxa.

Combined, we are striving to implement existing and new science-based data standards, providing recommendations for best monitoring practices, and encouraging innovation and use of data management, visualization, analysis, and decision support tools. True to the name and commitment to collaboration, transparency, and efficiency, we share data, lessons learned, and development costs of tools across AKN nodes.

Visit <http://avianknowledge.net> to learn more about the AKN, explore some of the nodes and tools, provide your feedback or questions, and join the AKN community.

By Katie Koch

The Avian Knowledge Network (AKN) recently launched its newly updated website at <http://avianknowledge.net> and invites your participation to further the success of this unique endeavor to conserve birds.

The AKN grew out of a series of discussions more than a decade ago and, in 2006, resulted in a grant awarded by the National Science Foundation to fund the network's foundational infrastructure. From that small beginning, the AKN has grown far beyond expectations to become the primary source of bird monitoring data in the Western Hemisphere.

One component of the AKN, called eBird, is the most successful avian citizen science project on the planet and includes hundreds of millions of records. Other components (called AKN regional and thematic nodes) such as the California Avian Data Center, the Rocky Mountain Avian Data Center, and the Midwest (U.S.) Avian Data Center, host over 20 million records from hundreds of research projects. They include point count, banding, nest success, area search, and distance sampling data.

An Eastern U.S. Avian Data Center is nearing launch, and will cover an area from the Caribbean islands to the state of Maine and west to Texas. Some nodes, such as Canada's Nature

The Power of Prairie: Secretary Jewell Meets with Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Staff

The Iowa prairie provided a beautiful backdrop as staff from Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge welcomed Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell on May 14, 2014. Secretary Jewell stopped in to meet refuge staff and learn more about how refuge biologists and managers have been working with partners to study innovations in prairie restoration techniques and how this effort can lessen hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

For greater than 10,000 years prior to European settlement, tallgrass prairie dominated this landscape and created some of the best soil for agriculture across the Midwest. However, extensive conversion of grasslands and wetlands for agricultural uses has made the tallgrass prairie ecosystem one of the most imperiled on earth.

During her visit, Secretary Jewell learned first-hand about the results of 20 years of grassland, oak savanna, and stream corridor restoration on former farmed land, as well as how Neal Smith Refuge has been a pioneer in restoring diverse prairie on a landscape scale.

In addition to discussing research efforts with refuge staff, Secretary Jewell met with local and state government representatives and partners, along with non-governmental researchers who are working with the refuge on an innovative landscape-level partnership to embed prairie in farmed land. This project has the potential to benefit both agribusiness and conservation efforts.

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge is the first large-scale tallgrass prairie and oak savanna restoration effort attempted by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. With the return of large tracts in tallgrass prairie,



Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge staff welcomed Secretary Sally Jewell to learn about their research. USFWS photo by Doreen VanRyswyk.

grassland birds have responded. The refuge has seen an increase in breeding pairs of numerous grassland birds, including three surrogate species in the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big River Landscape Conservation Cooperative geography: Henslow's sparrow, Grasshopper sparrow, and Bobolink.

Researchers and partners of the Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips (STRIPS) based at the refuge, have learned that installing diverse prairie vegetation in 10 to 20 percent of experimental watersheds reduces sediment export by 95 percent and nutrient export by 85 percent. Prairie species naturally grow at different times and thus armor the soil all season, providing water-slowing, climate resilient vegetation that recharges groundwater, while providing important habitat for grassland birds, pollinators and other wildlife. Strategic placement of diverse prairie could be used to develop a new conservation paradigm urgently needed in a time of changing climate.

In addition to protecting conservation lands and creating wildlife corridors, this innovative grassland restoration effort contributes to the prevention of pollution to drinking water, streams and rivers, and ultimately, the reduction of hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico. Cooperating partners are promoting the STRIPS project beyond the experimental phase to pragmatically test prairie strips on private farmland in Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota and Kansas. This expansion of conservation practices on working lands is also encouraging potential connections between native prairie plantings and the biomass/biofuels industry. This application of science to on-the-ground management will expand opportunities to provide multiple ecosystems services on large-scale operations across the Midwest.

Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge staff manage approximately 5,600 acres of restored tallgrass prairie and oak savanna and have future

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Celebrating 20 Years: Minnesota Duck Stamp Program

Celebrating 20 years in Minnesota, the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program is designed to spark youth interest in habitat conservation through science, art, math, and technology. Students in kindergarten through high school are encouraged to interpret the natural world through artistic expression. Providing a basis for participation in the Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest, the activities also encourage students to move beyond simply “learning about” wildlife and wildlife art.

The 2014 Minnesota Contest received 900 entries from schools, homeschools, clubs, art studios and individuals. It was held on March 21, 2014 and 100 winners were selected. Contest judges included Nature Photographer Richard Birger; Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Manager Tim Bodeen; Wildlife Artist John House; Minnesota Zoo Interpretative Program



Volunteers Steve Nelson and Ruth Hiland record placement on the artwork. USFWS photo.



Minnesota judges Tim Bodeen, Mike Williams, John House, Dick Birger and Jessica Madole scoring artwork that Park Ranger Lynda Knutsen is showing. USFWS photo.

Developer Jessica Madole and Wildlife Photographer Mike Williams.

The 2014 Minnesota Best of Show artwork is an acrylic painting of a Harlequin Duck painted by Felix Oh age 14, of Woodbury, Minnesota. Special Student Honor goes to Anna Kronbeck age 11, of Hawley, Minnesota. Her artwork of an Emperor Goose will be the visual image for promoting the program for 2014. This year’s recipient of the Minnesota Teacher Recognition is Mary Pat Simons from Valley Middle School of Apple Valley, Minnesota.

The Minnesota Conservation Message Winner is Anyen Fiedler age 11, Fergus Falls, Minnesota. with her statement, “All species have one chance at survival. Once they’re all gone, nobody can bring them back.” Anyen is a student at the Prairie Science School with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Prairie

Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls.

Mara Koenig, Minnesota State Coordinator of the Federal Junior Stamp Program stated, “Anyen’s message is a prime example of the Service creating the next generation of conservationists through environmental education.”

By Mara Koenig

Around the Region

Lake Michigan Continued.

Bishop Park Transient Marina, Wyandotte, Mich. – BIG grant: \$1,170,500; non-federal match: \$1,170,500; total project cost: \$2,341,000:

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation will partner with the City of Wyandotte to construct a transient marina at Bishop Park along the Detroit River. This location is directly contiguous to the Wyandotte Central Business District, and so this project will have significant economic benefits for small businesses due to an anticipated increase in tourism-related spending during summer months. The project includes walkways, floating piers with utility pedestals and additional amenities, resulting in 21 new slips for use by eligible boaters.

Smale Riverfront Park Marina, Cincinnati, Ohio – BIG grant: \$1,500,000; non-federal match: \$1,500,000; total project cost: \$3,000,000:

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Watercraft will partner with the City of Cincinnati to construct the Smale Riverfront Park Marina on the Ohio River. The marina will feature a floating dock system for up to 28 eligible vessels, as well as a harbormaster facility with restrooms, laundry, shower facilities and a pump-out station. The proposed marina will provide a key accessible connection for transient boaters to the downtown core of the city including national museums and two professional sports venues, as well as the Ohio River Trail.

We can safely say this was a successful year for states in the Midwest Region as they claim 33% of the total dollar amount of the BIG program competitive grants. Funding for the BIG program comes from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund which boaters and manufacturers support through excise and other taxes on certain fishing and boating equipment and gasoline. This grant is made possible by the Service's Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program.

By Joanna Gilkeson

Recovery Champs Continued.

standing cave gate, one of the largest in the nation, at the cave's entrance.

McKenzie shared his expertise with the Missouri Department of Conservation to develop the Topeka Shiner State Action Plan, a conservation tool that addressed the concerns of landowners, both public and private. McKenzie's work facilitated the reintroduction of about 3,300 Topeka shiners in Little Creek Watershed and Big Muddy Creek.

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.

By Georgia Parham

Power of Prairie

wetland restorations in the planning stages currently. In addition to this expansive natural area, the refuge is home to the Prairie Learning and Visitor Center, with 13,000 square-feet of exhibit space, environmental education labs, and a bookstore operated by the Friends of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge. Neal Smith Refuge is a leader in environmental education, with four partner schools and more than 50 partner teachers. The program reaches more than 7,500 students annually. The refuge offers great recreational opportunities to the visiting public. More than 140,000 people visit the refuge annually, and volunteers donated more than 14,000 hours of their time addressing refuge priorities.

By Tina Shaw

Putting an End to Deer Poaching on Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge

Thanks to an anonymous tip and solid investigative work, a 17-year serial poacher from Minnesota was sentenced in federal court on May 13, 2014 after pleading guilty to a Lacey Act violation for transporting wildlife that was unlawfully taken in violation of federal law. In October 2013, William Robert Welsh, age 41 of St. Cloud, Minnesota pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor charge.

A plea agreement outlines an admission from Welsh that, in October of 2011, Welsh shot and killed a deer in the closed area of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. The following day, Welsh sawed off the deer's antlers and transported them to his residence, leaving the remainder of the carcass in the field. Welsh later transported the antlers and other evidence to another person's residence and instructed them to hide the items.

As part of the sentence, Judge Franklin L. Noel of the Minnesota District announced that Welsh is barred from hunting "big game" anywhere in the United States for five years, banned from entering Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge for five years and forfeits his seized firearm and hunting equipment, along with trophy deer mounts and antlers from seven illegally taken deer. Judge Noel placed Welsh on two years of probation and 100 hours of community service, additionally banned Welsh from hunting small game during that time.

This court case stems from a joint U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources investigation that documented what may be the most extensive poaching activity in the history of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Welsh's illegal deer



White-tailed deer. Photo courtesy of Steve Gifford.

hunting operation was located north of Zimmerman, Minnesota in an area of the refuge that is closed to all public access.

"This investigation revealed at least a decade of egregious poaching on the refuge and other areas throughout the state," explained U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Zone Law Enforcement Officer Brent Taylor.

"While the loss to the resource cannot be undone, it is good to know that this poacher will not be able to continue his unethical behavior anywhere in the country," continued Taylor.

The investigation started when Federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Officer Scott Pariseau received a call in November 2011 through the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Turn-in-Poachers hotline. Based on that information, investigators located Welsh unlawfully hunting in the closed area of

the refuge with his young son. Officer Pariseau, along with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conservation officers and Office of Law Enforcement special agents, identified five permanent tree stands in the closed area of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge that Welsh used for hunting deer.

"We are pleased to see this poacher brought to justice," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Resident Agent in Charge Pat Lund, supervisor for Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri. "Gluttonous wanton waste like this has no place on refuge lands and has a negative impact on legal, ethical hunting opportunities," continued Lund.

Prior to this investigation, Welsh had been cited by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 1996 for trespassing and illegally hunting deer in a Minnesota state game refuge, for which Welsh's

Continued on next page.

Putting an End to Deer Poaching Continued

hunting privileges were revoked for three years. During an interview in December 2011, Welsh told investigators that, in 1998, while his hunting license was revoked, he hunted using his wife's deer license and killed a deer and tagged it using his wife's deer tag. Investigators found and seized this illegally taken deer during the execution of federal and state search warrants at Welsh's residence in December 2011.

The investigative team discovered that Welsh illegally killed eight white-tailed deer in the closed area of the refuge from 2006 to 2011. Welsh had five of these deer mounted, and simply cut the antlers off the other three. Welsh referred to one of these deer mounts

as his "big 8-pointer." Welsh showed investigators a large tattoo on his back that depicted the skull and antlers of the deer. Welsh also admitted to killing three other deer off the refuge in violation of state law near St. Cloud, Minnesota. A witness told investigators about a fourth deer that Welsh shot at night from a vehicle while using a spotlight.

Investigators re-interviewed Welsh in July 2012, during which time he told investigators he had discarded the five remaining deer that investigators had determined were illegally taken in violation of federal and state laws. In the plea agreement, Welsh agreed to forfeit these five unlawful deer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but failed to make

them available to investigators. In all, Welsh forfeited four deer mounts and the antlers from three other illegally taken deer.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would like to recognize the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and their conservation officers, whose assistance in this investigation was instrumental in the successful outcome of this case.

By Tina Shaw



Part of the illegal poaching by William Robert Welsh of St. Cloud, Minnesota. USFWS photo.

Employee Profile: Lisa Williams

Lisa Williams serves as the Branch Chief for Environmental Contaminants in the East Lansing Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). She has worked for the Service since completing her Ph.D. in Environmental Toxicology – Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University in 1993. Williams and her team work primarily in Michigan and conduct Natural Resource Damage Assessments and Restoration with other trustee agencies and tribes; investigate impacts of contaminants on the health and reproductive success of Great Lakes birds; investigate emerging contaminants and Beneficial Use Impairments at Great Lakes Areas of Concern, assist National Wildlife Refuges on contaminants issues related to acquisition, management and remediation/restoration of Refuges; help protect threaten and endangered species; provide input on federal project and permit reviews; and prepare for and respond to spills of oil and hazardous substances. Recently she has been working on the potential threat of neonicotinoid insecticides, particularly to pollinators and butterflies, including threatened and endangered species and those proposed for listing.

Born and raised in Sycamore, Ill. Williams went to college at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill. and then went to graduate school at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich. She began her career with the Service working on a Natural Resource Damage Assessment related to releases of PCBs from General Motors facilities along the Saginaw River. She served as the technical lead for the Service as part of the Trustee Council that reached a \$28 million settlement with General Motors, and then led the implementation of the settlement which resulted in removal



Dr. Lisa Williams wins Science Leadership Award. USFWS photo by Jim Hudgins.

of PCB-contaminated sediments from Saginaw River; restoration of coastal marshes and lake plain prairies, and improved educational and recreational opportunities in the watershed. Since then she has continued to work on NRDA at large Superfund sites and oil spills. She has also served as an invited expert to assist on other NRDA around the country, including Commencement Bay, Anniston, and the Hudson River.

In 2010, Williams helped manage the Service's responses at the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf and the Enbridge Line 6B pipeline release near Marshall, Mich. and provided technical assistance to the Service responders at two pipeline breaks in Illinois that threatened critical habitat for the Hines Emerald Dragonfly. She also worked with Mike Penskar of Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) to improve the U.S. Coast Guard's response to a spill in Cheboygan, Mich., in an area with listed plants and piping plover

critical habitat. In 2011, Williams also helped manage the Service's response to the pipeline break on the Yellowstone River near Billings, Mont., and provided advice to Service responders in Wisconsin when a coal ash pile slumped into Lake Michigan.

Williams' Service career is expansive. "I have spent my entire career with the Service as a Contaminants Specialist and then Branch Chief in the East Lansing Field Office, with a few short details to provide assistance to other field offices and a few longer details," she says.

In addition to leading her team at the East Lansing Field Office, Williams provides assistance, advice and informal mentoring to contaminants specialists across the country and especially within Region 3. In 2011-2012, she served as the Environmental Contaminants Coordinator in Region 6. In 2006-2007, Williams

Continued on next page.

Employee Profile: Lisa Williams

was part of the Service's Advanced Leadership Development Program and served for 30 days as the Invasive Species Coordinator for Refuges at headquarters and for 60 days as the Refuge Manager at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. As an adjunct professor at Michigan State University, Williams has served on graduate student committees and given numerous guest lectures on both technical topics and careers in science and government. Overall, Williams has shared information in over 60 technical presentations, 80 guest lectures, seminars and public presentations, and is an author on approximately 40 publications.

Williams joined the Service in May, 1993 after making some fortuitous contacts. "While in graduate school I had had several interactions with scientists in the Service and was encouraged to apply for a position at the East Lansing Field Office when one opened up as I was finishing my Ph.D. at Michigan State University." Williams' dedication is clear.

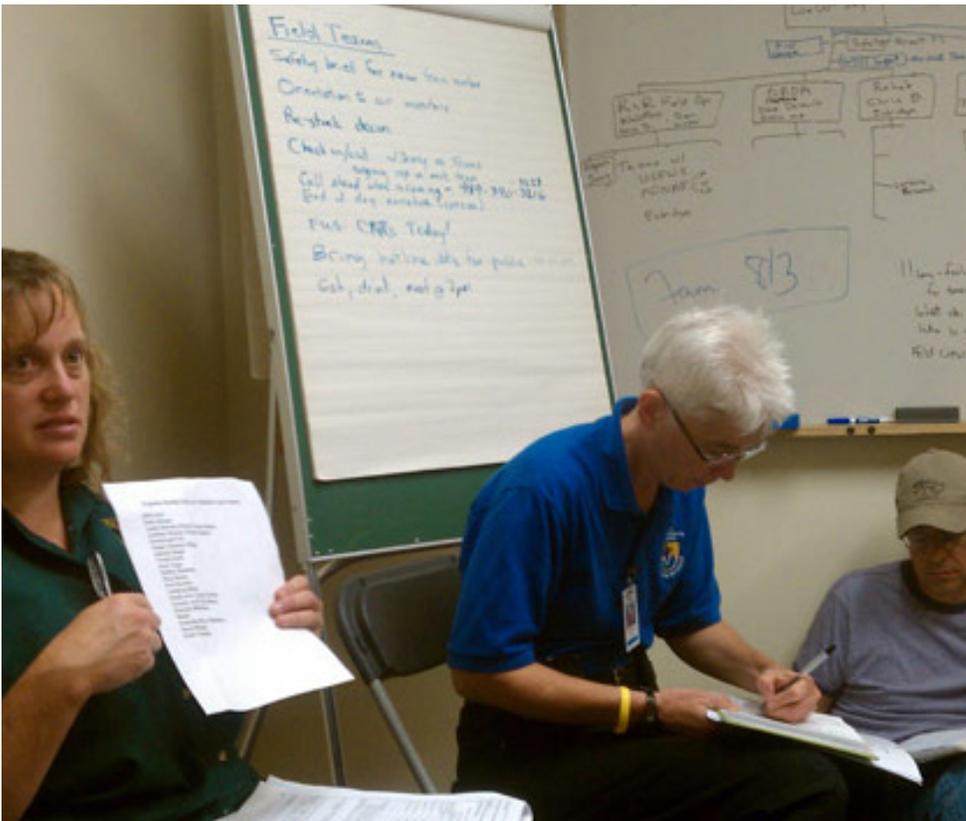
"I love the mission of the Service," she says. "I wanted to apply science to solving real world problems to benefit fish, wildlife and habitats. The Service provides me with the opportunity to do this in a way that is consistent with my values." Williams was in school when

she had an epiphany that changed her life. "While still in graduate school I had already observed how scientific information could be used selectively and decided that I did not want to work either for advocacy groups or private industry," she says. "Here in the Service I can investigate important issues, provide balanced analyses of technical questions, and accomplish real changes on the ground, both directly through natural resource damage assessment and restoration and through assisting others. On top of all of this, I get to work with talented and dedicated folks who also believe in the Service's mission."

Williams also volunteers and helps with youth fishing events held by the Mid-Michigan Steelheaders and performs as Puddles at the annual International Migratory Bird Day celebration in Lansing each year. She has an active personal life, as well.

"Outside of work," she says, "I love spending time with family and friends, training for and competing in triathlons, gardening, restoring native plants on my rural property and going birding, hiking, paddling, and scuba diving."

By Valerie Redmond



Service biologist Lisa Williams (center) conducts a planning session during response to the Enbridge spill. USFWS photo.

Midwest Bird Conservation Community to Focus on Monitoring and Making Bird-Friendly Decisions at August Workshop

Come join the Midwest Coordinated Bird Monitoring Partnership for a terrific five-day workshop, abounding with inspiring speakers, focused working group sessions, presentations on the latest scientific findings, educational field trips, and hands-on training opportunities!

The Creating Bird Friendly Landscapes in the Midwest workshop will be held in Port Washington, Wisconsin, August 4-8, at the Country Inn and Suites, and you're invited.

Registration is free, but participants will be responsible for lodging, travel, and meal costs.

The workshop will feature:

- Talks on research, monitoring, management, and education efforts addressing Midwest bird and habitat conservation goals.
- Collaborative working group sessions exploring how to coordinate and integrate monitoring into conservation and management decisions.



Workshop field trips are being scheduled, and we're optimistic we won't need down parkas! USFWS photo by Katie Koch.

- Hands-on workshops on our Midwest Avian Data Center, Bird Conservation at Home, and more.

New this year: Organizers are putting together an evening social event to explore successful habitat restoration projects within an important migratory bird stopover corridor. Enjoy local

birding, good cuisine, and great camaraderie!

Thanks to the many volunteers who stepped forward to help plan working group sessions and workshops, lead field trips, and assist with logistics for the workshop and social event. We couldn't do this without you!

Download a registration form (PDF) (Word Document) and stay tuned to our website for new information.

By Katie Koch



Steve Lewis, Regional Office Migratory Birds Program, and Amanda Duren, Coordinator of the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative, chat during last year's workshop. Join us this year and learn about or present the latest and greatest work in Midwest Bird Conservation during the poster session. USFWS photo.



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