



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**October 2009**

**In Honor of Roosevelt's Birthday...**

**Embracing**

**Innovation**



**A Novel Idea Born in the Midwest: The Teddy Project**

**Plus:**

- Rapids Lake Makes a Big Splash**
- Grafton Harbor Energizes Local Economy**
- Native American Liaison Update**

# what's inside

## *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](mailto:valerie_redmond@fws.gov) with your Let's Go Outside! and Kids Corner articles, photos, journal entries and poems.

*On the Cover:* The Teddy Project, an animated Teddy Roosevelt cartoon designed to teach kids about wildlife and wild places, was born in the Midwest. USFWS Artwork.

Theodore D. Roosevelt  
October 27, 1858 – January 6, 1919;

## *Departments*

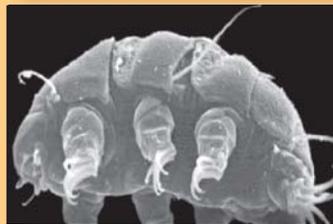
The Buzz /4

Let's Go Outside! / 13

Around the Region / 14

Quote of the Month / 20

## *Features*



### **Embracing Innovation / 3**

*The RD gives his views on embracing innovation.*

By Tom Melius

### **Rapids Lake Makes a Big Splash / 5**

*2009 Federal Energy and Water Management Award Winners*

By Chuck Traxler and Valerie Rose Redmond

### **BioBlitz Update / 9**

*Scientists Gathered to Collect Different Species and Taxa*

By Thomas Simon

### **Native American Liaison Update/6**

*An Update from the New Native American Liaison*

By Timothy Patronski

## Climate Change

Climate Change is impacting our fish and wildlife resources. As a nation, and an agency, we accept that climate change is real and it is impacting our environment. I understand that as individuals we may not all agree as to the cause and potential solutions to climate change. However, in our role as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees, the citizens of this nation expect us to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife resources. So, as we move forward to adapt our actions in the face of a changing environment, we must keep that mission first and foremost in our minds.

In the past two weeks, the President, the Secretary of the Interior, and our Director all moved forward with bold statements, ideas and plans charging us to increase our efforts to address this changing climate. I hope you have all had the opportunity to review the Interior and Service plans. I will not restate that information here. However, if you haven't read that information or if you need more, I encourage you to visit our Regional Climate Change website at: <http://midwest.fws.gov/climate>.

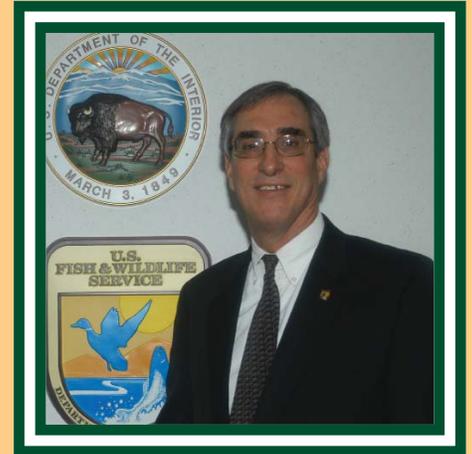
### **Climate Change, Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC):**

To help us take these complex concepts and focus them toward on-the-ground action that will

help us achieve our mission, the Service is moving toward focusing on the areas where climate change and SHC overlap. The geographic location where this work will be conducted is being called a landscape conservation cooperative. Basically we want to ensure we provide the needed tools to those of you who work on the landscape so that you can take the right action, in the right place, at the right time, to get the right outcome.

Landscape conservation cooperatives will be formal, science and management partnerships between the Service, U.S. Geological Survey, other federal agencies, tribes, NGOs, universities, and others to increase and integrate both conservation science and management capacity across specific landscapes. A key role for LCCs will be to acquire, apply, and operationalize large-scale climate change models and analyses to species and habitat specific management questions and actions on a landscape level. The tools developed by the LCCs will allow FWS offices, and our many partners, to implement on-the-ground actions in the most effective locations to meet our goals. LCCs are integral to climate adaptation efforts, but they are not climate-centric.

In the Midwest Region we have identified five LCCs. We have decided to focus our attention first on what is being called the Plains and Prairie Pothole LCC. The exact form and function of this LCC is still being developed. More



details on the LCCs will be coming out after the October Directorate meeting and in the weeks and months to come.

This is an exciting time for all of us. There is great interest in moving forward to address not only our changing climate, but the changing society in which we live. Remember, not all change is bad; but it is inevitable and I do believe that we can have an impact. If we decide to not fully engage and just hope this goes away, we run the risk of becoming irrelevant.

I encourage you to engage in helping to implement this change, in not only our agency, but in yourself and our society.

Thank you and stay engaged.

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



## The Buzz

### Horicon NWR Hosts Successful YCC

Horicon National Wildlife Refuge hosted a successful Youth Conservation Corps program this summer with four young men and women, under the guidance of an excellent crew leader. The group accomplished a tremendous amount of work. This year, they spent a lot of time on construction projects and invasive species removal. They built a hunter access boardwalk across a ditch, a kiosk and several notice boards. They also assisted with the Rockvale observation platform and site work, and placed a split rail fence at the viewing area. For invasive species removal, the crew cut buckthorn, sweet clover, and wild parsnip. They were also involved in several surveys and studies, including goose banding with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, tern research, fish electro-shocking surveys, and orchid search with Leopold Wetland Management District. The team also cut and trimmed trees and brush along trails and water control structures, picked up litter, washed vehicles, replaced signs, weeded and mulched around the visitor center, cleaned and painted facilities.

The crew was treated to several educational field trips including visits to two caves, two fish hatcheries, the International Crane Foundation and Devil's Lake State Park.

And lastly, but most importantly, while the crew did generally have a safe summer, one enrollee ended up with a case of poison ivy. --Diane Kitchen



Above: Left to right, YCC enrollees A.J. Kitchen (Beaver Dam), Dylan Myers (Mayville), Crew Leader Scott Kelly, Becca Gray (Waupun), and Youth Leader Kathleen Dreymler (Waupun). USFWS Photo.

### Fish and Wildlife Service supports Chicago Public Schools on Sampling

A combined effort by the Chicago Public Schools, the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and Purdue University entitled, Project Wet was formed to provide outdoor experiences for minority public school children from Chicago. Project Wet is sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and Chicago Wilderness as an outreach for inner city school children. The project was done as part of the outreach for the National Geographic sponsored BioBlitz of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. (Read about BioBlitz on page nine.) Contaminants Biologist, Thomas Simon, Ph.D., of the Bloomington Field Office was invited to participate in the program and together in cooperation with the Barrington Field Office provided an hour program at two schools.

School children from middle schools in the Chicago Public Schools on the near Northeast side of Chicago had the chance to attend a day program in Miller Woods sampling macro invertebrates. Simon followed up by visiting their classroom to discuss the variety of reasons why we sample as scientists. The presentation included information on the variety of Service data needs and the relationships the Service has with its partners to protect the fish and wildlife resources. The presentation showed lots of pictures of field sampling and at one point an interactive demonstration was conducted. Simon taught the students how to sample aquatic macro invertebrates and how to seine fish. He taught them the darter dance, which is a riffle kick technique. He finished his presentation by describing to the students how they could get involved through volunteering with local groups in the Chicago area. Simon also answered questions and provided literature and supporting information to the teachers.

--Thomas Simon Ph.D., R3-Bloomington FO



Above: Thomas Simon, Ph.D., teaches Chicago Public Schools middle school students the darter dance for sampling stream riffles habitats. USFWS Photo.

# Rapids Lake Makes a Big Splash

## 2009 Federal Energy and Water Management Award Winners

The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge - Rapids Lake Unit, Education and Visitor Center (Center) has been selected as a 2009 Federal Energy and Water Management Award winner.

Rapids Lake was recognized in the category of Sustainable Design/High Performance Buildings - Small Groups. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) team members who worked on the project include: Charlie Blair, Tom Kerr, Deborah Loon, Andrew McDermott, and Sean Wagner.

The Center, surrounded by restored prairies and framed by large oak trees, appears almost as natural in the valley as the river itself. It was constructed with the latest in green technology to help minimize its footprint on the surroundings. Geothermal heating and cooling systems, low water usage fixtures, rainwater gardens, native no-mow grass seed mixtures, extensive use of recycled building materials and

other features help the facility use 46 percent less energy and produce 46 percent less carbon than a typical building of its size. While the Center and the location are exceptional, it is what happens in and around this building that is truly



Above and Right: The Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Rapids Lake Education & Visitor Center. USFWS Photos.

impressive.

The Center's secluded location in a scenic river valley, makes it easy to forget how close it is to nearly three million residents of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn. But, it is this proximity to a large metropolitan area – and specifically to a large metropolitan airport -- that not only provides the opportunity to educate a large and diverse urban audience, it is in fact the reason the Center was able to be built. The funds for the



construction of this facility are the result of a trust fund established to mitigate the impact of a new airport runway that sends airline traffic directly over portions of the Minnesota Valley Refuge.

Thanks to this trust fund, and this new Center, the staff here can focus a large part of their time on environmental education, specifically elementary education.

With the addition of this latest education and visitors center, along with its existing visitors center and headquarters located 20 miles down river in Bloomington, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge is surely one of the premier environmental education facilities in the refuge system.

The award will be presented at a ceremony on October 28, in Washington, D.C.

-- Charles Traxler, Valerie Rose Redmond, External Affairs

# Native American Liaison Update

Did you know that there are 36 federally recognized Indian tribes and over 3.8 million acres of tribal lands in our region? In the two months since I started my position as our Midwest Region Native American Liaison I've had the pleasure of meeting with some fantastic tribal biologists and managers and learning more about their natural resource management programs. I am in a unique and exciting position—serving as a resource both for the Tribes and for our various U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) programs.

Each of the Tribes in our region is a sovereign nation with its own natural resource program, management goals and objectives. Their natural resource staff ranges in size from one to more than 25 during seasonal peaks. I recently visited with the Bois Forte Lake Superior Band of Chippewa Indians, the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, the Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa Indians, the Prairie Island Indian Community and the White Earth Band of Chippewa in Minnesota to learn more about their natural resource programs and their projects funded through our tribal grant programs.

Since 2003, the Service has funded 62 projects for over

\$9.6 million to 24 Tribes in our region through our tribal grant programs. Projects have addressed issues ranging from cormorant management to wild rice and waterfowl habitat enhancement to grey wolf population dynamics and lake sturgeon restoration. These projects have had a big impact on the resources and have been important for building tribal capacity for fish and wildlife management in the Midwest.



Above: Harvesting wild rice from Nett Lake in late August and early September is an important traditional activity for the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa Indians, as well as for other Tribes in the Midwest Region. USFWS Photo.

As I write this article, I am heading back from the 22nd Annual Native American Fish and Wildlife Society–Great Lakes Region Meeting, which was held in Traverse City, Mich. this year and hosted by the Grand Traverse Bay Band of Ottawa and Chippewa

Indians. The meeting featured some tremendous presentations, intriguing policy discussions, delicious traditional foods, and great people.

This annual meeting is a great opportunity for us all to learn more about Tribes and the work they are doing. It's also a great venue to share information about what the Service is working on. The next annual meeting will be held in June 2010 concurrent with the national Native American Fish and Wildlife Society meeting. It will be hosted by the Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa Indians near Duluth, Minn.

I want to learn more about your work with Tribes and work with you to highlight those partnerships. With 36 Tribes and 3.8 million acres of tribal land in our region, there are tremendous opportunities for us to work together; learn from each other and get good things done on the ground. Give me a ring or send me an e-mail anytime—I look forward to working with you.

--*Tim Patronski*  
*External Affairs*

# New Eagle Discovery Area at Sherburne NWR

Visitors to the Wildlife Drive at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge now have the opportunity to learn about bald eagles by stepping inside a life-size eagle nest. This summer refuge mechanic, Thomas Siekaniec, headed a crew that consisted of the three high school Youth Conservation Corps enrollees, three college interns and three firefighters. The team built a sturdy eight-foot diameter, octagon shaped deck with rails and access ramp that became the base of the nest. The second part of the project, attaching the sticks, was accomplished by eleven refuge volunteers under the guidance of Robin DeLong. This dedicated group spent more than 30 hours collecting over 1,000 two-foot long sticks. They spent over 40 hours attaching them to the deck rails and weaving them

together to create an amazing replica of an eagle nest. A bench and three interpretive panels describing the bald eagle's life, nest and food were also installed at the site.

The eagle discovery area is located in the center of the one-tenth mile paved Oak Savanna Trail adjacent the information kiosk for the Prairie's Edge Wildlife Drive (Drive). A crushed granite path leads the visitor to the discovery area and then continues on to a wildlife observation deck where two permanent spotting scopes are available for viewing wildlife and an active bald eagle nest.

The Friends of Sherburne partnered in the Eagle Discovery Area project by providing a bench with memorial funds donated by the family of Lloyd Podtburg. This planned bench was the perfect match for the Podtburg family who were seeking a significant memorial for their father, an avid refuge user fond of watching bald eagles.

Refuge staff and volunteers are already making plans for additional interactive



Jim Pasch, refuge volunteer, begins the process of adding the nest material, two-foot long sticks, to the rails of the deck that is to become a replica of an eagle nest for the Eagle Discovery Area at Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Nancy Haugen.

exhibits for the discovery area such as an eagle silhouette for comparing one's arm-span to the wing-span of an eagle and a cross section on an oak tree so growth rings can be counted. They will also bring in rotting logs for insect searches. The discovery area is located in a great location with easy access to the Drive.

Sherburne Refuge, along with Whittlesey Creek NWR, Rice Lake NWR and Crane Meadows NWR, all part of Zone 13, were the winners of a zone challenge presented to visitor services staff attending the Region 3 Visitor Services Workshop at Neal Smith NWR in June 2007. The four refuges split the \$30,000 prize, each receiving \$7,500 for creating a discovery area that would enhance the refuge experience for children.

--Nancy Haugen, R3-Sherburne NWR



In the eagle nest replica are Nancy Haugen, visitor services manager, Breanna Olson refuge volunteer and Robin DeLong, lead volunteer who coordinated the collecting and placing of over 1000 sticks into the nest. USFWS Photo by Jim Pasch.

# Service Holds Congressional Coordination Meeting in Ohio

## Building on our Partnerships:

On September 23, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), in coordination with the Ohio DNR, convened a meeting of district congressional staffers from across Ohio and a key environmental policy adviser from the Ohio governor's office. The meeting, which was held at the Franklin Park Conservatory in Columbus, was the first of what will become regular forums designed to brief congressional staffers on Service activities in their respective state.

The gathering, which was organized and facilitated by Ryan Aylesworth (Congressional Affairs Liaison), allowed Service employees to provide a comprehensive overview of the following:

- Service mission, goals, organizational structure, program areas and initiatives.
- Ohio-based operations and activities.
- Emerging issues that pose challenges to fish and wildlife conservation efforts in the region.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for congressional staff to openly engage Service employees, as well as their peers, on a wide range of natural

resource issues of mutual interest.

Topics discussed included the following:

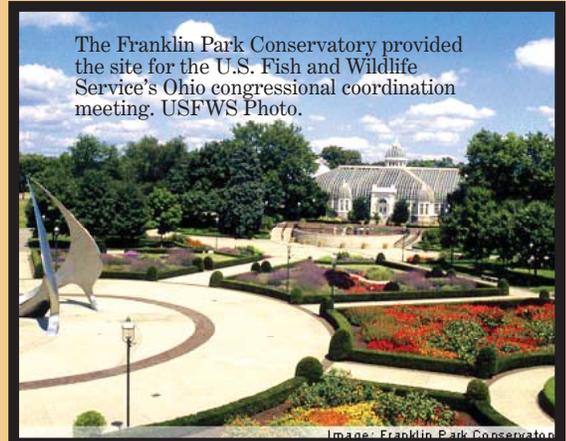
- Natural resource protection and public use opportunities at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Complex (Doug Brewer, Refuge Manager).
- Wildlife restoration on private lands (Kristin



Ken Phillips (La Crosse Fish Health Center) discusses FWS efforts to address fish diseases at the Ohio congressional coordination meeting in Columbus. USFWS Photo.

Westad, OH PLO)

- The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program and federal-state partnerships (Jim Hodgson, WSFR Chief; Dave Graham, Director, Ohio Division of Wildlife).
- Aquatic invasive species and fish habitat partnerships (Mike Weimer).
- ARD Fisheries: Bob Adair, Sea Lamprey Program Coordinator; Rob Simmonds, Project Leader, Carterville FWCO; Becky Lasee and Ken Phillips, Project Leader and



The Franklin Park Conservatory provided the site for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ohio congressional coordination meeting. USFWS Photo.

Microbiologist, La Crosse Fish Health Center).

- Endangered species and wind power impacts on wildlife (Mary Knapp and Megan Seymour, Project Leader and Wildlife Biologist, Reynoldsburg ESFO).
- Recovery Act projects being implemented throughout the state.

In coordination with project leaders and other field staff from across the Midwest Region, the regional leadership intends to convene similar forums in all eight states on a regular basis. Discussion topics and messages for each meeting will be selected and developed based on input and assistance from Service field staff and public affairs/outreach specialists.

A big 'thank you' is due to all Service employees that participated in the Ohio forum!

--Ryan Aylesworth, External Affairs

# National Geographic BIOBLITZ Update

National Geographic Society, as part of the celebration recognizing the accomplishments of the National Park system, sponsored a 24 hour biological blitzkreig (BioBlitz) of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, earlier this year. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is one of nine parks that was sampled during the several year rotation



Left: Thomas Simon Ph.D. instructing students on the identification of fish collected from the near shore of Lake Michigan during the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Bioblitz. USFWS Photo.

and the only freshwater system. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is widely known as the birthplace of modern ecology.

The purpose of a Bioblitz was to bring diverse groups of scientists and the public together to rub shoulders and see science in action. The

scientists collected as many different species and taxa as possible. All specimens were released alive or had photographic vouchers taken.

The Service was involved via Bloomington Field Office Contaminants Biologist, Thomas P. Simon Ph.D., who was the team lead scientist for fish. He led three field groups and instructed the public on sampling techniques in the field. Simon was also highlighted as one of four scientists at the closing ceremony that was interviewed “live on-stage” by National Public Radio, based on invitation by the National Park Service. Simon’s role in the field was that he contributed data and identifications on fish and macro invertebrates (primarily crayfish) during the 24 hour event.

The scientists are still processing samples, entering data, and completing quality control on the data. It takes many months to go through the hundreds of samples that were collected. Several interesting finds have been reported including the discovery of a new water bear (Tardigrade: Family Echiniscidae), which are microscopic (300 microns) and can tolerate extremes of heat and cold. They live in lichens and can “hibernate” during dry or drought periods, but can be rehydrated with a drop of water. The name is reminiscent of the slow, lumbering gate of a bear and they have four pairs of legs. This species is new to science and will be described by



Above: Newly discovered water bear (Tardigrade: Family Echiniscidae). Photo courtesy of National Geographic and the National Park Service.

the scientist that found it. There are over 100 species of water bear known to science.

The number of species at the end of the event was 788 and within a few hours after the closing ceremony increased to 1095 species. As of today, the species tally is up to 1200 and the Park Service estimates that the final tally may increase substantially yet.

There are several blogs and a web page that National Geographic Society maintains on the event. See: [http://blogs.nationalgeographic.com/blogs/admin/mt-search.cgi?tag=BioBlitz&blog\\_id=82&IncludeBlogs=82](http://blogs.nationalgeographic.com/blogs/admin/mt-search.cgi?tag=BioBlitz&blog_id=82&IncludeBlogs=82) In addition, an extensive photo library of the event exists: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/indianadunes/> For additional public relations information, contact Linda Lancaster (219) 395-1682.

-- Thomas P. Simon, Ph. D.,  
Fish and Wildlife Biologist

# Sound Science Supports Better Fishery Management

For decades, non-native rainbow smelt, alewife and other exotics have been the primary prey fish base that top predators (lake trout, and introduced trout and salmon) relied upon in Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Huron. These species essentially had replaced the historic native prey fish species in the diet of predators. This dietary shift may contribute to the recovery hindrance of native lake trout in lakes Michigan and Huron. The historic prey fish community consisted of a variety of fishes know collectively as coregonines – which includes the cisco (formerly called lake herring), lake whitefish, and several deeper water species – bloater (hoi), shortjaw cisco, and kiyi (small, very deep water form of cisco). While these native prey fish all remain present in Lake Superior, they are absent or substantially reduced in lakes Michigan and Huron. Rainbow smelt and alewife have become the primary prey species. Recent changes in the Great Lakes ecosystem that are not well understood have led to the dramatic decline of rainbow smelt and alewife in all three upper Great Lakes, providing many biologists with hope that



Above: Agency biologists, including the Service's Glenn Miller, set up the Tucker trawl for sampling. USFWS Photo.

the native forage base will respond positively and can be restored, thereby helping to restore native lake trout populations and stabilize fish communities.

In Lake Superior (where cisco populations are currently abundant), Ashland Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office biologists are working with biologists from the U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin DNR, and Michigan State University to investigate the spatial and temporal overlap between rainbow smelt and larval cisco during the cisco's first month of life after hatching. Specific objectives are to:

- Measure horizontal and vertical distributions of rainbow smelt and larval cisco during day and night at

- sites with varying turbidity.
- Gather rainbow smelt food habits during day and night during this time frame to determine when and how many larval cisco are consumed by rainbow smelt.

Ashland Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO) biologists captained the 26-foot R/V Coaster which pulled a mid-water Tucker trawl, zooplankton net, and hydro-acoustic gear to collect data.

Tucker trawl and zooplankton tows are conducted off the vessel during day and night operations. Ashland FWCO biologists also conducted shoreline beach seining at several locations along Lake Superior to sample smelt. Sampling started in April and continued into early June. The tiny, larval cisco began to show up in the trawls in early May. This three-year project funded by the Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act will help biologists throughout the Great Lakes learn more about interactions between smelt and larval cisco, and hopefully contribute to restoration of a more stable, predominantly native fish community.

--Henry Quinlan, R3-Ashland FRO

# Grafton Harbor Grant Program Helps Energize Local Economy

More than one million cars each year travel the Great River Road that parallels the Mighty Mississippi on Illinois' western border. It is the destination for many: a small river town called Grafton, population 715. Once a place to call home for more than 10,000 residents in the nineteenth century, Grafton housed the craftsmen of the boating industry. They worked on all kinds of boats from paddle wheels and commercial ferries to torpedo patrol boats during wartime.

"Shaffers Wharf was the hub of the city," said Mayor Tom Thompson. "Fishermen would unload their fish at the wharf and store their catch in Shaffers pond," The historic wharf made out of natural stone from a nearby quarry is a remnant of the 1800s, preserved by the town's people for more than a century.

With the assistance of a Boating Infrastructure Grant, the city revived its boating heritage by increasing transient boating opportunities with the construction of Grafton Harbor in 2007.

Called the Key West of the Midwest, Grafton Harbor offers recreational boaters an opportunity unlike any other to re-energize and take in the natural beauty of the confluence.

The Great Flood of 1993 left its mark on the town, leaving severe

structural damage that caused a third of the residents to relocate. As the floodwaters receded, the town rebuilt. The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program administered by the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program competitively awarded a \$996,000 federal grant to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 2006. The Illinois DNR began working with the City of Grafton on the federal grant, an opportunity to increase the town's economic viability from the transient recreational boating and tourism industry.

Grafton is less than an hour's drive from St. Louis, Mo., and is the oldest town in Jersey County. Sitting at the confluence of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, its natural beauty and historical charm make it a unique weekend escape for the Midwest vacationer.

"I can't think of a city that has the natural beauty and the assets that Grafton has," said Mayor Thompson. "The white bluffs, the fall colors; we are the main tourist attraction along the Mississippi River, and offer everything from fish stands to fine dining."

Construction of the marina began in 2006 and was completed in early 2007. The federal grant paid for an environmental assessment, power pedestals, plumbing and electric, footings for ramps, ramp and walkway, day docks for seven slips, a dock for 35 transient slips, an ADA ramp, floating breakwater for 32 transient slips, a rock dike and

dredging.

"The marina has provided a huge boom to our tourist industry," said Mayor Thompson. "It has assisted the city by increasing the number of tourists, including boaters, people who have long-term leases and visitors who frequent our shops."

Additional marina amenities include a floating pool, private bathroom suites, concierge level dock services, mechanic services, high speed diesel and gas pumps, in addition to multiple nearby dining and shopping venues. Complete funding for the marina and construction of the many amenities came from multiple grants and partner donations.

"Consider the employment opportunities the harbor has helped to provide, from the vast number of people employed at the marina, to higher employment at so many other businesses that profit from increased tourism," Thompson said.

The marina and harbor amenities also complement many of the events and festivals held in Grafton throughout the year, including the Great Rivers Towboat Festival in June and Eagle Watching days along the Mississippi bluffs during the winter months. Continued on page 9.

# Innovation in Communications Midwest Leads with New Media



meetings. In addition, the Midwest had a heavy presence at the recent Change Confabulation Forum held September 21-23 in Washington. The objective of the forum was to converse about expanding the Service's communication program and increasing its online presence. Look for more on the Change Confabulation

Forum in next month's issue. For more information visit: <https://intranet.fws.gov/change/>.

Tweets, blogs, texts, wikis and RSS feeds have crept into our lexicon, much like e-mails and websites did 20 years ago and iPods and mp3 players did 10 years ago.

Last year, the doors opened a crack for Service employees to take advantage of new media opportunities. External Affairs led this charge with several, first time initiatives. 2-way blogs for the Duck Stamp contest and an ongoing 'roving reporter' blog.

R3 was the first region in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to complete web standardization of over 100,000 web pages. Several field stations in the region explored podcast tours. The climate change group began

use of a Wiki Blog. "Just Escape," a R3 connecting people with nature television show aired its first broadcast on Minnesota Television Network. Dozens of regional employees are part of a FWS Facebook group. YouTube videos of Duck Stamp and other R3 events hit the air last year. External Affairs transitioned to VOCUS, a news media distribution and evaluation service. R3 employees submitted nearly 800 Accomplishment Reporting System reports, which were used for compilations, news articles, congressional and VIP briefs and tours.

This year, Midwest External Affairs employees, among other efforts, began region wide interactive electronic video conferencing of all employee



# Let's Go Outside

## Hamden Slough Youth Hunt

It was all smiles at Hamden Slough NWR mentored youth hunt on September 19. Hamden Slough celebrated two milestones. It celebrated its 20th year anniversary of being established as a National Wildlife Refuge, and it hosted for the very first mentored youth waterfowl hunt in the state of Minnesota. Twenty-four youth from all over the state of Minnesota came with their parents to learn from experienced waterfowlers. This mentored youth hunt was a collaboration among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota DNR, and Ducks Unlimited. The Friends of the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District played the most important role, as it provided a pancake and sausage breakfast for the hungry crowd of young waterfowlers. Right: Hamden youth hunters and mentors Scott Kahan, USFWS Photo.

-- Scott Kahan, R3-Detroit Lakes WMD



## Fish, Food and Fun!

The Iron River National Fish Hatchery (IRNFH) hosted its Seventh annual open house on September 12. One of the six high priorities of the USFWS is connecting children and nature. That concept was put forth in an effort to draw children to this year's open house. Open house coordinator and fish biologist, Carey Edwards, planned a unique experience for the hatchery, as well as several other fun outdoor activities that showcased the hatchery and its mission. Above: Caitlin Westlund tries her hand at fly casting. Left: Several children try to catch the elusive lawn bass. USFWS Photos. --Carey Edwards, R3-Iron River NFH

# Around the Region

A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFWP) wetland restoration project was completed on the Stephenson property in July 2009. The project, located in Bayfield County, Wis. within the Lake Superior Watershed Focus Area for Region 3's PFWP, consisted of 2 wetland restoration sites totaling three acres. A PFWP Habitat Development Agreement was signed to protect the restored area for a period of 10 years. This newly restored and protected wetland will provide ideal resting and nesting conditions for many species of migratory songbirds and waterfowl. Species benefiting from the habitat restoration and protection project include migratory waterfowl such as wood duck, mallard, and American black duck, as well as migratory songbirds such as sedge wren and Le Conte's sparrow.

Left: Stephenson Wetland Restoration. Mike Mlynarek from Whittlesey Creek NWR, the refuge's YCC crew, and the landowners son take a break from the toiling. Bayfield County, Wis. USFWS photo by Ted Koehler.



The restoration is on former agricultural land adjacent to land owned by Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Mike Mlynarek from the Whittlesey Creek NWR and Ted Koehler from the Ashland National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office worked in close coordination to accomplish the restoration and improve the Whittlesey Creek watershed. Wetlands have been restored on the neighboring refuge property during the past two years. These private land restorations will add to the complex in the local area. Waterfowl surveys conducted on Whittlesey Creek NWR's newly restored wetlands show use by a variety of ducks, geese and other birds. It is expected that the wetlands on the Stephenson property will see a similar amount of waterfowl use. --*Ted Koehler*

# Midwest Region Leading with Innovation

## The Teddy Project

Jonathan Schafler is uniquely connecting two generations of kids with nature with an atypical approach. The Teddy Project, an animated Teddy Roosevelt cartoon designed to teach kids about wildlife and wild places, was born in the Midwest. A novel idea, The Teddy Project, flips the script of the traditional model by taking nature to kids instead of bringing kids to nature. With a sea of electronic gadgets competing for their attention, this project snags these kids' attention almost effortlessly, by showing up where they're at and by engaging them with what already intrigues them.

The general premise is that students from urban art schools design and develop two to three minute animation and 3-D graphic pieces that feature wildlife in America. Younger students view the finished projects on DVD or on the web. All involved learn about wildlife through venues that they enjoy.

"What I really love about the Teddy Project," Schafler says, "is that it hits young people at both ends of the spectrum. It teaches college age students about wildlife and wild places as they make and research the project. [And] it teaches younger students at the earlier end of the project by using the medium that most young children like which is cartoons."

Schafler came up with the idea while working as an assistant refuge manager at the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). The first project began with the Art Institutes International Minnesota in Minneapolis, which is one in what



Left: Schafler with students who have participated in the program. USFWS Photo.



is a system of more than 40 schools located across America.

"The idea of an animated Teddy Roosevelt cartoon had been ticking around in my head ever since I joined the Service," says Schafler. "If a big red dog can teach our kids social values, if an ardvark can teach them right and wrong, why can't Teddy Roosevelt who is the father of conservation, an instantly recognizable figure to millions of Americans teach our kids about wildlife and wild places?"

To date 38 of cartoons have been produced with over 200,000 student hours. Student projects have featured a fish hatchery, an ecological services office and a myriad of national refuge wildlife

### A NOVEL IDEA

**The Teddy Project, an animated Teddy Roosevelt cartoon designed to teach kids about wildlife and wild places, was born in the Midwest.**

refuges across the region and the nation. Of the 38 films, the best one, Schafler says, is a Midwest produced Horicon message called, Red Heads and Watersheds. The Midwest has produced videos, from out of three venues: Minneapolis, Chicago, and Schaumburg, Ill. The titles include Prime Hook, Splash and Migration Station, which focused on the Minnesota Valley NWR in Bloomington, Minnesota. (For a preview of the films, visit: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/Kids/>). The latter garnered them a Best In Show Award from the American Conservation Film Festival.

# Midwest Region Leading with Innovation

## The Teddy Project

The innovative project is attracting new audiences. Buttman, another Midwest installment, which warns against the dangers of smoking in wild places, won the top prize at Boulder's Very, Very Small Film Festival.

Schafler says the project has the opportunity to reach a wide spectrum of young people in our country and really make a difference, but reiterates that we can't expect them to come to us. In order to reach the audiences that we want to get interested in wildlife and wild places we've got to

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bring it to their medium, he says.

"It's one thing to say hey come to us and we'll show you wildlife and wild places," Schafler says. "You've gotta bring it to them. You've got to go where they are now. You've got to go to their inner city schools. You've got to go to their homes. You've got to get something that really appeals to young people through technology."

Schafler says that another innovative technique would be to put outreach coordinators in inner city schools to teach kids about the wild.

Schafler hopes to entice a



nationally recognized animator to produce a cartoon. That kind of exposure could affect a whole new generation of kids who may be afraid of the wild.

The biggest challenge he says is the time factor. Schafler, a 23-year

veteran of the military, is still in the reserves, has two small children, and runs a national wildlife refuge. He says he has schools begging to do films and five to six schools that haven't even been touched yet. Schafler says he would love for someone to take it to the next step and make it great.

A two volume DVD set of all 38 Teddy Project films is currently at the printer. His intent is to ship a set to each regional External Affairs office and Refuge Chief. Additional copies will be available through the image library at NCTC.

All of the films are the property of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But it's still his baby, he says. "My dream is that it will be every kid's favorite cartoon. I would love to see it as a happy meal with plush Teddy and Puddles toys and a trailer line that talks about the NWR system."

-- Valerie Rose Redmond  
*External Affairs*

### Grafton

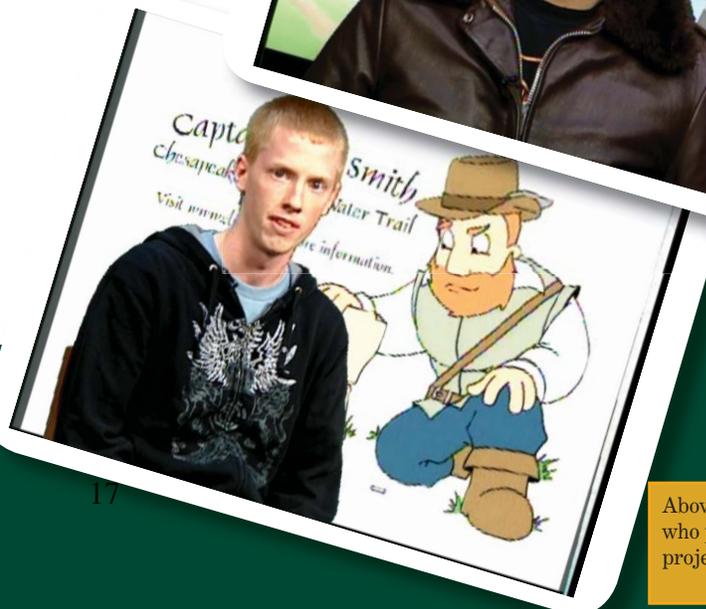
(Continued from page 11)

"Receiving the support from this federal grant program has been a great stimulus for our local economy," Thompson said.

Authorized by Congress in 1998 through the Sport Fishing and Boating Safety Act, the Boating Infrastructure Grant program provides funding for construction of facilities that enhance boating for large recreation boats. The grant funds are generated from a federal excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat fuels; a user pay-user benefit model that allows anglers and recreational boaters the opportunity to support the boating industry, and the fish and wildlife of the boating world. All of the facilities developed with these grants are open to the public. For more information on the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/FederalAid/bigp.htm>. For more information on the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/FederalAid/>.

-- Ashley Spratt, *External Affairs*

# Kid's Corner



Above: Students from the Art Institutes International who participated in the program pose in front of their project designs. USFWS Photos.

# MIDWEST REGION 2009 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



**Category:** Refuge Lands  
**Title:** A Day at the Office  
**Description:** Burn at Two Rivers NWR  
**Submitted by and pictured:** Cliff Berger, Zone FMO  
**Photo taken by:** Don Wiley



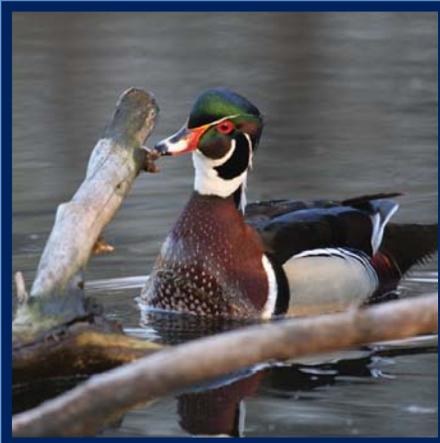
**Category:** Plants, Trees, Flowers  
**Title:** Blue Flag  
**Submitted by:** Walt Ford, Rice Lake NWR



**Category:** People, Children and Nature  
**Title:** Sunfish Surprise  
**Description:** Longear Sunfish (*Lepomis megalotis*)  
**Submitted by:** Tim Haller, Big Muddy NFWR



**Category:** Nature, Landscapes  
**Title:** Glorious Rising  
**Description:** Sunrise  
**Submitted by:** Kurt Svendsgaard, Tamarac Refuge



**Category:** Migratory Birds and Sky  
**Title:** Wood Duck  
**Submitted by:** Mike Sweet, Regional Office



**Category:** Fisheries, Water  
**Title:** Brown Beauty  
**Submitted by:** Jeff Slade, Ludington Biological Station



**Category:** Insects  
**Title:** 12 Spot Widow Skimmer  
**Submitted by:** Rick Hansen, Columbia, MO FO



**Category:** Animals  
**Title:** Gray Tree Frog  
**Submitted by:** Rick Hansen, Columbia MO FO

## ***CONGRATS!***

# MIDWEST REGION 2009 PHOTO CONTEST

Thank you all for the submission of more than 700 photos for the 2009 R3 photo contest. There is clearly some amazing photography talent out there in the field, and the judging was quite competitive and challenging. After two rounds of judging in the RO (one to narrow the field to a top three- and a final round where the RDT picked the winner of each category), we have arrived at winners of each of the eight categories. These photos will be used in a variety of outreach and media opportunities, and we appreciate the effort.

We also invite you to take part in a "People's Choice" judging--to see if you come to

the same conclusion as the RDT. To cast your vote in The People's Choice contest, visit: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB229PDLYJRSZ>. Note the winning entry is the #1 photo of each of the eight categories. We will announce the people's choice awards in a few weeks.

Note: For your advance planning purposes, for next years contest we anticipate having a single category, "Service employees at work".

-- Jason Holm  
*External Affairs ARD*

Congratulations to this year's winners:

- Animals: Rick L. Hansen
- Insects: Rick L. Hansen
- Migratory Birds/Sky: Mike Sweet
- People and Nature: Tim Haller
- Plants, Trees & Flowers: Walt Ford
- Refuge Lands and Work: Don Wiley
- Fish and Water: Jeff Slade
- Landscapes: Kurt Svendsgaard

## Runners Up

Photo by: Gary J. Wege  
Refuge Lands



Photo by: Rick Hansen  
Plants, Flowers, Trees



Photo by: Rick Hansen  
Children and Nature



Photo by: Walt Ford  
Nature - Landscapes



Photo by: Gary J. Wege  
Migratory Birds, Sky



Photo by: Rick Hansen  
Insects



Photo by: Jeff Slade  
Fisheries and Water



Photo by:  
Richard C. Hager  
Animals



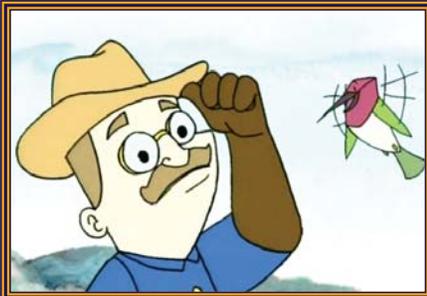
# Great Job!



## Quote of the Month

“The lack of power to take joy in outdoor nature is as real a misfortune as the lack of power to take joy in books.” --Theodore Roosevelt

# The Many Faces of Teddy



Above: The project design and art work of the students from the Art Institutes International who participated in the The Teddy Project. USFWS Artwork.