



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

November 2010

International Importance

USFWS Midwest Region:
A Worldwide Model



*Grady Moore Waterfowl
Production Area dedication.*

Plus:

Sea Lamprey: International Threat

Chinese Delegation Visits

Finnish Hunters Engage in Conservation USA

Editor's Note:

Connecting with nature does not look the same for everyone. Connecting with nature means different things to different people. For some, it's hunting and fishing. For others, it's walking in the woods or on the beach. What does your nature encounter look like? We want to know. To that end, we have added a regular section called Let's Go Outside!

We invite you to submit personal nature encounters as experienced by you and your children, as well as innovative ideas on how to connect with nature. We will run your accounts in this feature segment.

Please submit your youngsters' stories and photos to our regular section: Kid's Corner. Kid's Corner features the nature writing and photographic pieces by the children of regional employees.

E-mail: valerie_redmond@fws.gov with your Let's Go Outside! and Kids Corner articles, photos, journal entries and poems.

On the Cover:

Mary Stefanski taking charge on the mighty Mississippi. The Upper Mississippi River Floodplains has been recognized as a Wetland of International Importance. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.

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International Importance

This November is an opportune time to reflect on the international importance of our work, as there is much going on globally in our organization. Notably, I've just returned from Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge where we celebrated the designation of the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Wetlands as the 30th Ramsar site in the U.S. This wide expanse covers 302,344 acres of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. There now are more than 1,800 sites worldwide designated as wetlands of international importance.

Conservation efforts in today's world dictate cooperation that extends well beyond our borders. Inclusion and partnership are not only intellectually responsible, but they are crucial to our mission.

Biodiversity conservation, clearly, is a global issue that requires the inclusion of broad, global perspectives in sound decision making. The international implications of rising sea levels and eroding shorelines, for example, pose consequential threats to both human and wildlife populations around the world. History and science illustrate the devastating impacts of climate change when left unchecked. Successional loss of habitat, loss of food sources, early migrations, and extinction are just to name a few. That is why with both the Plains & Prairie Potholes LCC and Upper Mississippi & Great Lakes LCC, Canadian involvement is critical. Last month Acting Director Rowan Gould announced the finalized U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Climate Change Strategic Plan which

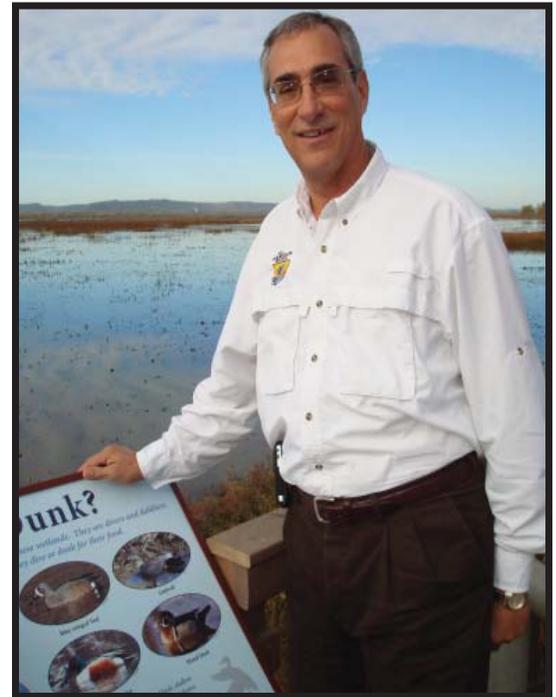
underscores the significance of transcontinental partnerships and highlights leadership and management, adaptation, mitigation, engagement strategies for the Service (page 26). To view copies of the final strategic plan in its entirety, visit <https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/Climate-Change-Strategic-Plan>.

In addition, the ecology and biodiversity in large rivers around the world are also of major concern to the Service. Charlie Wooley recently spoke at an international rivers conference with the U.S., Russian and Chinese biologists in Memphis. This conference provided Service biologists an opportunity to renew friendships, share challenges and successes, and reaffirm the level of coordination and cooperation between international conservation agencies.

Invasive species control is also an internationally important conservation issue. Soon we will list the parasitic sea lamprey an injurious species to prevent them from spreading into new waters. I encourage you to read about the Service's borderless battle against them on page 7.

Last month we welcomed three waterfowl management professionals from the Finnish Hunters' Central Organization to learn about conservation and habitat management strategies underway in the U.S. (Read more on page 29).

Finally, I am so pleased to tell you that in the first two weeks of November another Chinese delegation will take place, with the Midwest region as acting host. Our international friends will visit many sites in our region



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge for the Ramsar designation event. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

as we compare and exchange information on conservation strategies as related to the Yangtze and Mississippi rivers. Included on their tour will be the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge, Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District, Necedah NWR, Fergus Falls WMD, Winona District of Upper Mississippi NWR, Horicon NWR, Trempealeau NWR, Tamarac NWR, the regional office and the LaCrosse District UMR. I invite you to read more about the delegation on page 8.

Whether you are in the field or in the office, please remember that you all are doing remarkable work that bears international importance. I appreciate all that you do.

Warm regards,

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

Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Wetlands of International Importance

Designation by The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

In January 2010, the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Wetlands became one of more than 1,800 Ramsar sites worldwide. Over **302,300 acres of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin** are included in the Ramsar designation.

The site consists primarily of flowing main and side channel habitats, backwater marshes, and floodplain forests.



Photo by Robert J. Hurt



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, is an international treaty signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The convention provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation of wetlands around the world.



Facts about the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Wetlands of International Importance:

- home to more than **100 native fish species** and **42 native mussels** including the nationally **endangered Higgins eye pearl mussel**
- located at the core of the Mississippi Flyway, through which **40% of North America's waterfowl migrate**. Treasures of the floodplain wetlands are the canvasback duck and tundra swan.
- well over **3 million people visit** each year



Eric Engbretson



US FWS



US FWS



Alan Stankevitz

Partners of the designation:

The Ramsar site includes the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, and other federal and state-managed floodplain wetlands.



Upper Mississippi River Floodplains Recognized as Wetland of International Importance

The staff at Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge hosted members from the Ramsar Secretariat, as well as representatives from more than seven state, federal and nonprofit organizations on Oct. 14, as they commemorated the international designation of the Upper Mississippi River Floodplain Wetlands of International Importance. The Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge provided a picturesque backdrop for the event. Marking the occasion were, Deputy Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Paul Schmidt, Midwest Regional Director, Tom Melius, Wisconsin Congressman Ron Kind, Wetland Convention Secretariat Anada Tiega from Gland Switzerland and Suzanne Pittenger-Slear of the U.S. Delegation.

The Upper Mississippi River Floodplains Wetland of International Importance is the 27th U.S. wetland designated under the Convention on Wetlands. The U.S. became a party to the convention in 1987, which now includes 150 countries. Master of Ceremonies and Upper Mississippi



River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Manager, Kevin Foerster, commented, “The ecological, social, and economic values of the Upper Mississippi River make it one of the crown jewels of this nation’s wetlands. It’s certainly fitting that this area has now officially received international recognition. The upper reach of the Mississippi River is an ecological treasure.”

The designation includes more than 300,000 acres of federal and state lands and waters of the

Upper Mississippi River floodplain from near Wabasha, Minn. to north of Rock Island, Ill. The

Left: Autumn foliage and local pumpkins, acorns and apples framed the event. The dragonfly being the totem for the Upper Mississippi Ramsar designation. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

Above: Regional Director Tom Melius shared his love of wetlands and support for the Ramsar designation through interviews with local news media. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.

designation includes all of the 240,000-acre Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge headquartered in Winona, Minn. and the 6,226-acre Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin. In advance of the designation, Cindy Samples and Cortney White, of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, welcomed wetland enthusiasts from around the globe to celebrate the designation and support working wetlands through the “10-10-10 for 10! Celebrating Working Wetlands” events. In his remarks, Tom Melius noted that more than 300 people came out in celebration and said, “These events created a synergy of conservation—making

Continued on next page.



Upper Mississippi River Floodplains Recognized as Wetland of International Importance

a simple 10 minute exercise into an opportunity to highlight the importance of wetlands and give people a chance to celebrate through active participation in places that matter to them. Like the Ramsar Convention itself, these events create relevance and pride in the places we love—here and around the world.”

The refuge and surrounding public lands in the Ramsar site support more than 200 nesting pairs of bald eagles, 120 species of fish, 42 species of mussels and provide migration habitat for up to 50 percent of the world’s population of canvasback ducks. The site also serves as a major navigation highway for commerce and provides millions of citizens with abundant hunting, fishing and other recreational opportunities.

Forester

noted that Wetland of International Importance designation has no effect on current jurisdiction, authorities, or management responsibility of federal, state, or local governments that partner on the



Above: Refuge Chief Rick Schulz (left) shares a laugh with Cindy Samples (right, foreground).



management of the river. Foerster stressed that designation does not affect current river uses.

“All commercial and recreational uses currently allowed or allowed in the future are not affected.

Designation does not dictate land and water use of any kind,” Foerster said.

The designation proposal was endorsed by the Department of Natural Resources of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and seven members of Congress from the respective states.

For more information on the Wetlands of International Importance program, visit www Ramsar.org.

--Cindy Samples
USFWS



Above: Ron Luchau, President of Winona Dakota Unity Alliance, Paul Schmidt, Deputy Director U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Ramsar Secretary General, Anada Tiega all shared their thoughts about the importance of wetlands, both on a local and global scale. Photo by Mary Stefanski/USFWS.

Above: The Siekaniacs join in the celebrations.

A Bi-National Assault on Invasive Species

A Bi-National Assault on Invasive Species – 55 years of working with Canada in the fight against the Sea Lamprey

Our agency is vested in the conservation and management of fish, wildlife and their habitat not only within but also outside of our country's borders. The Service's role in combating invasive species, particularly the parasitic sea lamprey, is a primary example. The sharp decline of Great Lakes fisheries in evidence by the 1940s, caused by overfishing, pollution, habitat loss, and explosion of the sea lamprey population, brought about the development of a particularly successful bi-national effort between the United States and Canada. In 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, a first-of-its kind international treaty between the United States and Canada aimed at combating the causes of declining fisheries in the Great Lakes. The deepening and widening of the Welland Canal in 1919 to facilitate cargo transport between Lake

Ontario and Lake Erie opened up a thoroughfare for the sea lamprey to spread into new waters. The sea lamprey, a parasitic fish native



Above: Sea lamprey program personnel apply lampricide in Great Lakes tributaries to kill larval-stage lamprey and thus prevent their movement into the Great Lakes. USFWS photo. Below: Sea lamprey prey on host fish using a suction-cup mouth, sharp teeth and beak-like tongue. GLFC Photo.

to the North Atlantic Ocean, attaches to a host fish and feeds on its blood and bodily fluids, ultimately scarring and/or killing its host. A single sea lamprey will destroy up to 40 lbs of fish during its adult lifetime. Between 1920

and 1950, the population of sea lampreys in the upper four Great Lakes exploded.

“We went from no sea lampreys to incredible infestations in just a few years,” said Bob Adair, Sea Lamprey Management Program Manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Because sea lampreys were new to Great Lakes fish communities they experienced few natural

population limits and caused profound reductions in diversity and abundance of native fishes, particularly lake trout.”

The sea lamprey explosion threatened not only the Great Lakes ecosystem, but also the production and economic viability of this freshwater resource. The Great Lakes support some of the World's largest and most

Continued on next page.

A Bi-National Assault on Invasive Species

productive freshwater fisheries and with an annual value of \$7.5 billion, Great Lakes fisheries are an important contributor to local economies in the United States and Canada. Sea lampreys target lake trout, burbot, whitefish, Pacific salmon, brown trout, walleye, chubs and even white sucker and ciscos. Many of these stocks also support important commercial and recreational fisheries.

“For Great Lakes fish stocks there is no boundary between the U.S. and Canada. They move freely, so our sea lamprey management operations must do the same,” said Adair.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) - made of up officially appointed representatives from federal, state and provincial governments, experts in the field of Great Lakes research and other stakeholder organizations - was established by the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries to serve as a bi-national authority for sea lamprey management, and also to develop coordinated programs of research to help inform Great Lakes fisheries management. The Commission plays a key role by fostering working relationships among all partners with management authority or a vested interest in Great Lakes aquatic resources.

Today, the sea lamprey management program partnership includes the Service, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, U.S. Geological Survey and numerous state, provincial, university, non-governmental and public partners. The expertise that is brought



to the table helps ensure that the Commission makes the most efficient and scientifically informed decisions about sea lamprey control efforts.

“This is a species that has the potential to cause undeniable and unequivocal damage to the Great Lakes fishery,” said Marc Gaden, Communications Director and Legislative Liaison for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. “When you talk about a large fishery program on the Great Lakes, it is one thing to understand the science of it – what are lamprey, how to treat them - but it’s also so critical to understand why you are doing it, and ask the question: What are the human and societal desires and needs for the Great Lakes fishery?”

Regional Director Tom Melius visits with Ludington Biological Field staff this fall. Ludington is one of two Service biological field stations in Michigan involved in sea lamprey control efforts. USFWS photo.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Fisheries and Oceans Canada stepped up to serve as the U.S.-

Canadian agents for the Sea Lamprey Management Program and for 55 years have worked side by side to manage sea lamprey populations across the Great Lakes and its tributaries. In the United States, the Great Lakes Fisheries Act of 1956 authorized the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to serve as the U.S. Agent for sea lamprey control. Parallel legislation in Canada authorized Fisheries and Oceans Canada as the Canadian Agent. The Service’s sea lamprey control responsibilities are shared by Biological Stations in Marquette and Ludington, Michigan.

“Since we work with international

Continued on next page.

A Bi-National Assault on Invasive Species

waters, we try to make the program as border-blind as possible. We have divided up the waters in such a way that we support each other's efforts to maximize our efficiency," Adair said.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada works to control sea lamprey in all Canadian Great Lakes waters and also crosses the border to help out in the U.S., primarily in the lower lakes. The Service crosses the border to work in Canadian waters of the St. Mary's River.

"It is a matter of efficiency, both fiscally and programmatically to work together on both sides of the border," Adair said.

To be allowed to work in these international waters, Sea Lamprey Management Program staff work in cooperation with international authorities and border agents from both countries to obtain all required documentation and clearance. U.S. Sea Lamprey Management Program employees obtain official government passports like the one pictured that provide them entry to work across the border.

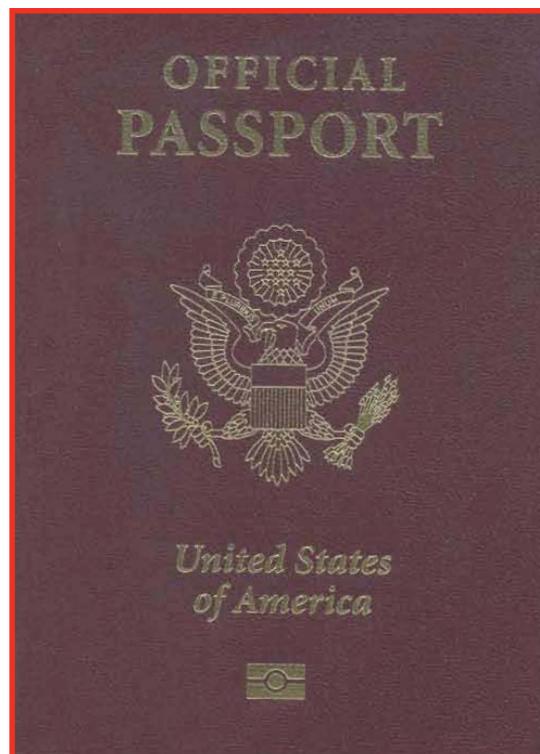
"Part of the reason why the Sea Lamprey program has become such a successful international conservation program is because the U.S. and Canada have 55 years of cooperation under their belts," Gaden said. "It is a border-blind, all-out assault."

Sea lampreys have remained a worthy adversary over the years. Although the ultimate goal is eradication of the species from



Great Lakes waters, maintaining populations at or below target levels is the near-term objective. As long as sea lampreys

Above: Original signers of the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. Photo credit GLFC. Left: Official government passport issued to U.S. Sea Lamprey Management Program staff to allow entry into Canada. USFWS photos.



persist in the tributaries and waters of the Great Lakes, and as long as the partnership between the U.S. and Canadian governments remains strong, the battle will wage on.

"One of the constants in the Great Lakes is that most folks in fisheries and aquatic resource management are strong supporters of the program," Adair said. "The cost-benefit is hugely positive – the U.S. –Canadian investment in this program is absolutely essential to the \$7.5 billion generated in economic benefits by the Great Lakes fisheries."

*--Ashley Spratt
External Affairs*

Midwest Region Recognition



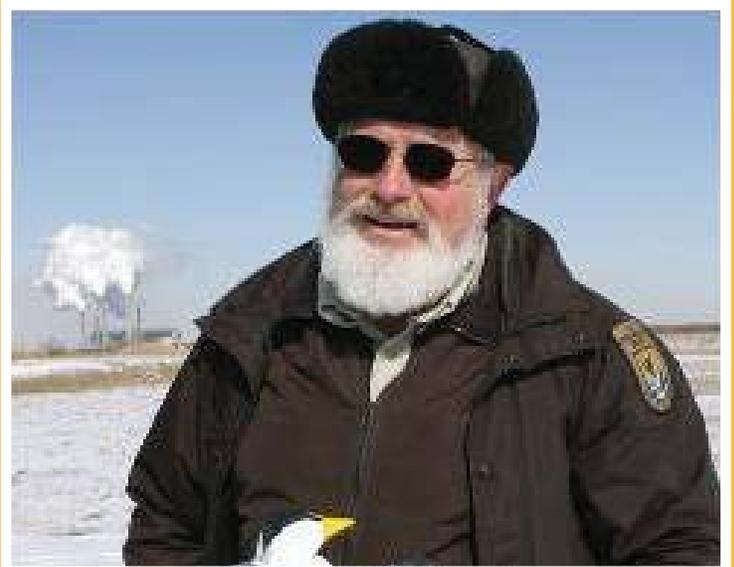
Above: Julie Anderson of the Regional Office received an award for 30 years of service.



Above: John Christian of the Regional Office received an award for 40 years of service.



Above: Linda M. Foster of the Regional Office received an award for 30 years of service.



Above: William J. McCoy Jr. of Patoka NWR was also an awardee for 40 years of service.

Midwest Region Recognition

20 Years

Berger, Clifford J. (NWRS Fires)
Davis, David R. (Detroit Lakes WMD)
Erickson, Steven F. (Trempealeau NWR)
Groom, Cheryl R. (Neal Smith NWR)
Henry, Catherine J. (Port Louisa NWR)
King-Wrenn, Kimberly M. (Crab Orchard NWR)
Lien, Dennis M. (Big Stone NWR)
Lilla, Randal (Upper Miss NFWR)
Lubinski, Brian R. (Regional Pilot)
Nurse, Steven J. (R3 Upper Peninsula Fire Management Office)
Raitz, Chad G. (Fergus Falls WMD)
Svendsgaard, Kurt (Tamarac NWR)
Thiel, Pamela A. (LaCrosse FRO)
Tidwell, Tom (Law Enforcement)
Van Eps, Danny R. (Agassiz NWR)

30 Years

Shuman, Johnny G. (Pendills Creek NFH)
Thomsen Meyers, Patti A. (Horicon NWR)
Genovese, Joseph H. (Fisheries Marquette)
Foster, Linda M. (Realty – RO)
Ochoada, Lucinda A. (WSFR – RO)
Julie Anderson – (HR – RO)



Ducks Unlimited Presents “BEYOND THE CALL” Awards to Perch Lake Partners

Recognition

Ducks Unlimited presented Deborah Loon of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Trust, and Mike Malling of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service received “Beyond The Call” awards for work above and beyond the call of duty on the Perch Lake enhancement project.

For more information visit:
<http://www.ducks.org/states/48/news/pub/article2298.html>.



Above: Deborah Loon (left) and Mike Malling (right) accept Beyond the Call awards from Jon Schneider (center).

Genoa NFH Biologist Visits China on Reciprocal Conservation Exchange

Jenny Bailey of Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) traveled to China this summer as part of a science exchange between the Peoples Republic of China's Ministry of Agriculture and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's fisheries division.

The visit was a reciprocal visit of a trip coordinated by the International Affairs Office of the Service and hosted by the Genoa station this spring when three visiting scientists from China were stationed at the hatchery. The Chinese scientists stationed at Genoa were active participants in many different conservation programs ongoing in the spring, such as broodstock netting and egg collections of walleye, perch, northern pike and sauger. They were also involved in fry stocking, and propagation of both lake sturgeon and endangered and threatened mussels.

LaCrosse was an ideal location for the Chinese to be stationed due to the diversity of conservation efforts ongoing in one location. They also assessed lake sturgeon restoration efforts on the Menominee Indian Reservation with the LaCrosse FRO, sampled fish for the Wild Fish Health Survey with the LaCrosse Fish Health Center and learned about long term resource monitoring and habitat restoration efforts on the Upper Mississippi River with USGS's Upper Midwest Science

Center and the LaCrosse district of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. Jenny with two other Service fisheries



commercially important minnow species.

Jen and her colleagues travelled to Beijing to finish off their trip and viewed ongoing sturgeon restoration efforts at the Chinese Academy of Fisheries Science. It is hoped that through these efforts to share conservation methods, progress can be made on both sides

biologists: James Henne of Bears Bluff NFH, S.C, and Allan Brown of Welaka NFH, Fla. in turn traveled to China's Heilongjiang Province, which forms the northern boundary with Russia.

The conservation challenges that the Service exchange group will learn about involve the conservation of chum salmon and the far eastern dace, *Tribolodon brandti*, an anadromous species of dace that can grow to over two feet in length. The group then travels to the Xingkai Lake to observe propagation efforts of the gouache paint, *culter alburnus*, a large

Top: Above: Jenny Bailey, with her interpreter Jia Jen along the banks of the Suifenhe River, the border of Russia and China, Heilongjiang Province. Bottom: Chinese fisheries personnel traverse the Suifenhe River, Heilongjiang Province China. USFWS photos.

of the world to restore some of our most threatened and endangered aquatic species.

--Doug Aloisi, R3-Genoa NFH



**Sunrise over marsh in Big Stone
County, Minnesota.**

USFWS photo by Eric Koronka.

Sustaining Our Great Lakes: Unique Public-Private Partnership Contributes to a Healthier Great Lakes

The Great Lakes are among the most important natural resources in the world. With more than 21 percent of the earth's surface fresh water, 10,000 miles of shoreline and 30,000 islands, they provide drinking water for tens of millions of people and habitat for a vast array of plants and wildlife, including more than 200 globally rare species. It's no wonder why myriad federal, state, tribal, private, and non-profit partners from the U.S. and Canada work tirelessly to protect and restore this North American treasure.

There are many funding programs that help accomplish this task, some that we are familiar with and some we are not so familiar with. The Sustain Our Great Lakes Program (previously known as the Great Lakes Watershed Restoration Program) is a bi-national, public-private partnership which provides funding for fish and wildlife habitat protection, restoration and enhancement in the Great Lakes basin. Program partners include ArcelorMittal, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the USDA Forest Service, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Since 2006, the program funded 103 grants worth \$12.1 million in federal and corporate partner funding. Grantees matched this funding with an additional \$14.9 million, for a total conservation investment of \$27 million.



1: Monarch butterfly alights atop a blazing star at John Merle Coulter Nature Preserve in northwest Indiana. 2: Heather Loebner, ArcelorMittal, poses with false heather, a plant found in old dune ridges at John Merle Coulter Nature Preserve in northwest Indiana. USFWS photo by Christie Deloria. 3: The Sustain Our Great Lakes team learns about oak savanna restoration conducted by Shirley Heinze Land Trust at Bur Oak Woods in northwest Indiana. USFWS photo by Amy McGovern.

Some of the important outcomes generated by this investment include the:

- Restoration/enhancement of more than 8,000 acres of wetland, shoreline and upland habitat.
- Restoration/enhancement of 25 miles of stream/riparian habitat.
- Restoration of fish passage to more than 400 stream miles.
- Development of 18 restoration and conservation plans.

Recently Service employees Christie Deloria (U.P. Sub-Office) and Amy McGovern (Regional Office), participated in a Sustain Our Great Lakes meeting in Chicago. The two day meeting started with a tough discussion on setting priorities and ended with participants putting their boots on the ground at two project sites. Setting priorities

International Waters Chinese Converse with U.S. on Conservation Issues

The Yangtze River in China and the Great River that cuts through America's midsection, although thousands of miles apart, face similar threats to the ecological balance of the habitats they provide and the resources they supply.

The Mississippi River, first navigated by early explorers in our nation's history, is now one of the most heavily trafficked transportation corridors in the world. From the headwaters of the far north to the hypoxic delta of the Gulf of Mexico, the Mississippi River basin feeds the agricultural lifestyles of the Midwest, waters the angler's thirst for sport fish, and provides habitat for some of the most threatened and endangered aquatic species in the country.

The Yangtze, the largest river in China and third longest in the world, flows from the southwest corner of the country to the east through Shanghai, the country's most populous city, before emptying into the East China Sea. It supports a commercial fishery that helps feed the country's 1.3 billion residents. It provides a thoroughfare for the transportation of goods across the country. And beneath its waters, the 6200 km river holds some of the last



Top: Zong Minqing, Deputy Director of the Division of Aquatic Fauna and Flora Administration Holds Lake sturgeon captured at Legend Lake on the Menominee Indian Reservation during spring assessments conducted by the tribe and the LaCrosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. The sturgeon was released by the Genoa National Fish Hatchery as part of a cooperative lake sturgeon restoration effort, USFWS photo. Bottom: Dr. Liu Wei, Director of the Heilongjiang River Fisheries Research Institute holds a lake sturgeon taken during the spring assessment. In the foreground members of the tribal natural resource department and the Chinese scientific delegation pull gill nets set during the assessment, as LaCrosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office biologist Ann Runstrom operates the boat.

remaining populations of Chinese fish species threatened with extinction.

The common challenges facing these rivers and their ecosystems have brought Chinese and American fish and wildlife agencies together to share conservation strategies and better understand the similarities and differences between their unique cultural views of conservation.

“When scientists work together across countries, we are increasing our opportunities to improve the environment on a more comprehensive, international scale,” said Pam Thiel, fish biologist from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s LaCrosse National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Thiel was one

of ten American delegates who participated in a two-week fisheries

Continued on next page.

International Waters Chinese Converse with U.S. on Conservation Issues

resources expedition in China in 2008. “We have to respond to the globalization of our economies and marketplaces at an environmental level as well,” Thiel said.

The U.S. - China delegation exchange program developed as a result of a series of science and technology agreements signed in 1986 between the U.S. and People’s Republic of China. Under the U.S. China Nature Conservation Protocol, the U.S. Department of the Interior and China’s State Forestry Administration are working together to address environmental issues and increase cooperation and exchanges between the countries’ conservation agencies.

“We are interconnected; what happens in one place, can happen in another,” said Steven Kohl with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Division of International Conservation. “China has the largest population in the world; because of this, their experiences can help us understand how to respond to urbanization and other negative human impacts using new tools and resources.”

The exchange brings leading fisheries biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service together with members of the China Ministry of Agriculture and Academy of Fishery Sciences. “The threats facing the Chinese sturgeon are similar to those facing the species’ close relative, the Pallid sturgeon, here in U.S. waters,” Thiel said. “Pollution, habitat degradation, dredging, the



Top: Genoa hatchery personnel and Chinese delegation with LaCrosse FWC insert passive integrated transponder tags into hatchery reared sturgeon for release into Legend Lake as part of lake sturgeon restoration efforts. Bottom: Genoa staff outside the delegations host station sign with the delegation on their last day in Wisconsin. USFWS photos.

construction of dams – these are the challenges we face with fish both in the States and abroad.”

Both the Chinese sturgeon and Pallid sturgeon are considered ‘living fossils’ because they lived up to 140 million years ago and bear the prehistoric appearance of dinosaurs. The Pallid sturgeon, with fewer than 300 in the wild population, was listed as federally endangered on the Endangered

Species List in 1990. The Chinese sturgeon is categorized as a ‘first class’ species in China’s National Catalogue of Protected Wildlife. Among China’s first class protected wildlife, many are aquatic species, including the Chinese river dolphin, Chinese paddlefish, red coral and Asian giant softshell turtle.

The gravity of the threats facing the Chinese sturgeon led to the development of the Chinese Sturgeon Research Institute, one of the sites visited by the American delegation. The research facility studies the species’

reproductive cycle and raises captive populations for propagation and release into the wild. Fan Xiangguo, Director of the Division of Aquatic Wildlife Conservation within the Ministry of Agriculture and member of the Chinese delegation, said that more than seven million Chinese sturgeon have been released into the Yangtze River in an effort to recover the species. However, Continued on next page.

Chinese Delegation will visit R3 in the first two weeks in November.

International Waters

Chinese Converse with U.S. on Conservation Issues

it remains uncertain whether the hatchery-reared fish are contributing to self-sustaining populations.

Pallid sturgeons are also captive-reared by state and federal hatcheries in the U.S. in an effort to reestablish populations in the lower Mississippi and Missouri rivers. But artificial propagation is just one element of recovery efforts for endangered fish species. Restoring habitat is critical for species like the sturgeon to survive.

Of the fish that are released in the Yangtze, only a small number are marked. Mass marking initiatives have become a key monitoring method for fish released into the wild in the U.S. Thiel and other fishery conservation agents hope the U.S. - China exchange program will encourage effective monitoring tactics, like mass-marking and that they will be adopted by Chinese fishery counterparts to help improve recovery efforts for the sturgeon.

Degradation and loss of habitat are the main factors contributing to aquatic species decline in the U.S. and China. Three Gorges Dam, the largest hydro-electric power station in the world, provides clean energy, power to millions of Chinese citizens, and prevents flooding, but has also resulted in major barriers to fish passage and decreased water quality.

In the U.S., the construction of dams and channels has also



Above: Chinese delegation and hatchery and LaCrosse FWCO staff working hard to PIT tag 1500 12 inch lake sturgeon for release this spring. USFWS photo.

contributed to loss of suitable spawning habitat for many species, including sturgeon.

According to Thiel, paddlefish, a species of concern in the U.S. are another victim of habitat loss, and are functionally extinct in China. In the U.S., paddlefish are illegally harvested for their eggs, a threat that has caused growing concern amongst many fish and wildlife agencies.

“Overharvesting by commercial fisherman, pollution and public perceptions continue to remain the major issues for fisheries conservation in many parts of the world,” said Thiel.

Li Yanliang, Director General of China’s Fishery Law Enforcement Command, headed the Chinese delegation. “Compared to the United States, our country started a little bit later in terms of technology,” he said. “We are behind and we recognize the need to educate our public more on wildlife conservation.”

As part of China’s effort to become more environmentally conscious, the Ministry of Agriculture set a priority of establishing nature preserves and strengthening habitat protection of endangered aquatic wildlife. China currently has more than 200 nature preserves, a number that has tripled since 1999. According to members of the Chinese delegation, nature preserves have already resulted in positive effects for fishery resources, water, ecosystems and sustainability of fishing communities.

“More people are paying attention to the protection of wildlife,” said Li.

China is also credited in the current economic climate for its booming economy and in turn, increasing mobility for its citizens. With increasing disposable incomes, demand for recreational activities has grown, including visitor centers and services in the country’s natural areas and

Continued on page 29.

USFWS Office of Law Enforcement Partners with Industry to Protect Trumpeter Swans

On Oct. 5, Ameren Missouri, with oversight from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, installed 1,000 “swan diverters” on several miles of high-voltage “transmission” power lines that cross the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary on the Mississippi River, near West Alton, Mo. in an effort to protect Trumpeter Swans.

The devices—each about 12 inches long and resembling a giant yellow corkscrew—will be installed by workers from helicopters hovering above the USACE sanctuary. They will be placed on the highest static wires of non-electric transmission towers—towers that are designed to absorb lightning strikes—as a means of alerting swans.

Each winter, about 500 swans from Upper Midwest breeding grounds winter at the sanctuary. Agents from the USFWS Office of Law Enforcement, USACE and officials from Ameren Missouri became concerned about evidence of swans being injured or killed by flying into the transmission wires. With the diverters in place, the birds should be better able to see the structures and fly over or under them.

Nearly extinct at the turn of



Above, Left: Haverfield Aviation, Inc. installation team, Pilot Dennis Anderson, and Aerial Lineman, Bryan Stewart, in flight. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw. Above, Right: Dennis Anderson, pilot for Haverfield Aviation, Inc. displays swan diverters and installation equipment.

the twentieth century, over the past 30 years, Trumpeter Swan populations have risen by about 400 percent, due to the conservation efforts of USFWS, the Trumpeter Swan Society, various state department of natural resources, conservation areas like the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary and concerned citizens.

John Christian, Assistant Director for the Service’s Migratory Birds and State Programs, noted that this growing winter population supports the Mississippi Flyway Council’s efforts to disperse the wintering population of this Upper Midwest nester to suitable sites well south of the breeding range where they find both abundant forage and a more hospitable climate.” Christian added that “we are most pleased to see industry partnering on protecting these majestic birds.”

Charlie Duetsch of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers adds that helping the wintering swans is in line with the sanctuary’s

and the Corps’ commitment to stewardship, environmental education and expanded outdoor recreation opportunities.

“The swan project allows us to balance the role of the rivers in a national transportation corridor; the environmental attributes of the area and the modern-day need for power,” he says. “It’s a very unique and creative project.”

Andy Buhl, Assistant Special Agent in Charge for the Midwest Region of USFWS praised Ameren Missouri’s efforts saying “We encourage industrial companies to coordinate with the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop best practices to avoid the take of migratory birds and other protected wildlife.”

Ameren Missouri, founded in 1902, provides electric and gas service to approximately 1.2 million customers across central and eastern Missouri, including the greater St. Louis area.

--Tina Shaw, External Affairs

Ten, Ten, Ten: Public Celebrates October 10, 2010 with the Service



1. Bikes and Binoculars: A 10 mile bike ride on Red Oak Road offered participants an opportunity to view migrating birds. Sponsored by the Friends of Pool 9.
2. Canoe the Slough: A 10 mile canoe tour sponsored by the Friends of Pool 9 (Upper Mississippi River NWFR) found participants paddling in the flooded waters of Reno Bottoms.
3. A 10/10/10 for 10! Celebrating Working Wetlands event in Clinton, Iowa: Participants identified 10 species of birds in the wetland.
4. A 10/10/10 for 10! Celebrating Working Wetlands at McNally Landing: Participants arrived to the area where the Big Sit was in full swing. At 10:10 am a photo was taken and they were rewarded with a program conducted by two students from the Interpretation Outreach Class of Winona State University.

Let's Go Outside!

Deanne Endrizzi: Enjoying Birds Through Digiscoping

I have been a bird watcher since about sixth grade, but it was most recent, within the last five years, that I found the technique of digiscoping birds to be a rewarding hobby. Digiscoping is the process of taking photos with a digital camera through a spotting scope.

It was quite by accident that I found my two pieces of equipment that were compatible. I discovered that my Sony Cybershot camera lens fit into the eyepiece of my Kowa spotting scope. It wasn't a perfect match, but it was workable.

Digiscoping birds is fun and rewarding, but there are some challenges. First you need to find the moving

Right: Endrizzi on an Eagle nest removal job near Duluth Minnesota. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond. Center: MINOX DCM Digiscoping System. Below: Scarlet Tanager digiscoped in Endrizzi's backyard in Burnsville, Minn. Photo by Endrizzi.



bird you wish to photograph in the spotting scope. Second you have to focus the scope on the bird and third, adjust the camera for sharp focus. You need to coordinate all three of these things hoping that the bird doesn't move. Believe me, it is an undertaking, but a gratifying one when you get good results.

I found it difficult to align my camera and the spotting scope to hold it steady, so I created a home-made adapter. The adapter consists of a section of a toilet paper roll and masking tape. This allowed the camera and the scope to come together snugly to make the three-fold approach work more smoothly.

The results were spectacular! It still carry my binoculars with me to locate the birds before I attempt to photograph them. Photographing birds is an

Let's Go Outside!

Deanne Endrizzi: Enjoying Birds Through Digiscoping

enjoyable hobby because you have to take the time to watch the birds longer than you would on a normal bird hike.

I have since purchased a single-lens reflex camera package, but the photos that I have taken with the SLR camera don't hold a candle to my digiscoped photos. I haven't completely given up on digiscoping.

Try it yourself; it is a fun thing to do to get outside!

--Deanne Endrizzi
Migratory Birds



Right: Eastern Bluebird digiscoped outside the visitor center at Minnesota Valley NWR. Center: American White Pelican digiscoped at Black Dog Lake, Minnesota Valley NWR. Below: Common Loon digiscoped at my place in Longville, Minn. Photos by Endrizzi.

Volunteer Group Boosts Karner Blue Butterfly Recovery

Under the leadership and dedication of Tracy Lee Karner (Yes, this is really her name), a volunteer group was initiated in Wisconsin in 2010 to assist with recovery activities for the Karner blue butterfly. A U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources wildlife internship



Above: Anna Hess surveying for Karner blue butterflies at Black River State Forest near Black River, Wisconsin. Photo taken by Jodi Shaw, Karner blue butterfly volunteer intern, summer 2010.

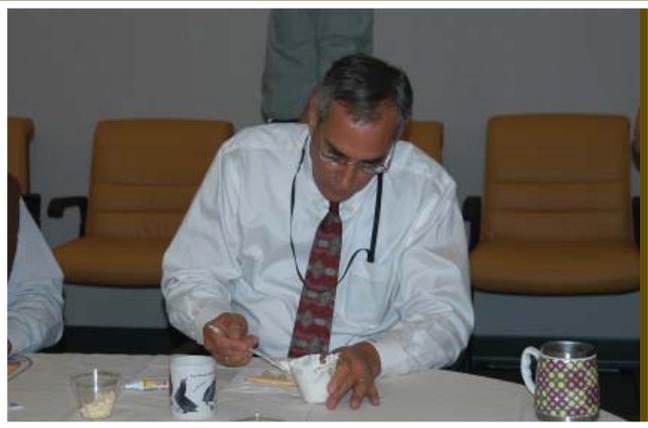


grant was secured by Jodi Shaw, who'd been hired to help launch the program. Jodi also worked under the supervision of Dr. Paula Kleintjes-Neff at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Thirteen volunteers worked with DNR staff, biologists from UW-Stevens Point, a private research group at Grantsburg, Anna Hess, a doctoral student doing research,

Continued on page 24.

Midwest Region Celebrates Refuge Week **Around the Region**



Regional Office Celebrated Refuge Week with Cookie Decorations

Regional Field Stations Celebrated Refuge Week with a Myriad of Events

Regional Refuge Week Events

- Winona District, Big Sit
- Winona District, Ramsar celebration
- Winona District, Big muddy Rendezvous at Prairie Island
- DeSoto NWR, Fall Migratory Bird Day
- DeSoto NWR, Big Sit
- Sherburne NWR, Fall Wildlife Festival
- Sherburne NWR, The Big Sit - Sherburne Savanna Sitters
- Minnesota Valley, Doc Wild
- Horicon NWR, 5K Run/Walk
- Detroit River, Open House
- Detroit River, buckthorn vol. day & open house
- Neal Smith, Ding Darling Prairie Rescue day
- Muscatatuck, Paint Out Day
- Muscatatuck, Big Sit
- Muscatatuck, Log Cabin Day
- Squaw Creek, Family Fun Day
- Squaw Creek, 5-K Trails run/walk
- Squaw Creek, Big Sit
- Squaw Creek, 75th Anniversary Celebration
- Crab Orchard NWR, Annual Photo Contest and Open Roads Day

Above: Regional employees enjoy decorating cookies in celebration of Refuge Week. USFWS photos by Valerie Rose Redmond.

DU and Partners Restore Wetlands at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge staff, Ducks Unlimited and many other partners dedicated a 67-acre coastal wetland restoration at the Brancheau Unit of the Refuge on Sept. 25. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnered with DU, Waterfowl USA, the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, Metropolitan Affairs Coalition, DTE Energy, and the North American Wetlands Conservation Council to complete this restoration on the DRIWR.

DRIWR is known for its islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and riverfront lands along 48-miles of the Lower Detroit River and western basin of Lake Erie. Such coastal wetlands are critically important for wildlife, water quality, and recreation.

The work was completed in two phases and involved the creation of a low earthen dike, ditching, and water control structures that allows the Refuge to emulate the natural conditions that historically existed on the site.

“This restoration project is especially important in this area because we have lost more than 90 percent of our historical wetlands,” Steve Dushane, assistant refuge manager, noted. “This project has not only restored wetlands and enhanced wildlife habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent wildlife, but it has reduced nonpoint source loadings



Above: Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge dedicates a 67-acre coastal wetland restoration at the Brancheau Unit. Photo by Joann Van Aken.

of pollutants to western Lake Erie and helped reduce the risk of flooding to local residences and businesses.”

The refuge focuses on conserving, protecting, and restoring habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 23 species of raptors, 31 species of shorebirds, over 100 species of fish, and more than 300 species of birds. The DRIWR is the first international refuge in North America and one of only a few urban ones in the nation. Unique habitats being managed within the refuge include islands, coastal wetlands, marshes, shoals and waterfront lands.

--Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Laudatory Praise

Below: Director Rowan Gould gives laudatory praise to the Midwest region for its work with ARRA, the Great Lakes and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Response. Afterwards, he and Dan Ashe conducted a question and answer session with regional office employees. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.



Put a Tiger in Your Tank!

Put a Tiger in Your Tank! was a slogan that was part of a popular 1960s marketing campaign that urged automobile drivers to fill-up with a particular brand of gasoline. But these words, now punctuated with a question mark, were all I could think of on September 22 when I left the Marineland Pet Center in Onalaska, Wis. after picking-up yet another unwanted pet fish whose owner could no longer care for it.

Today it was an unfamiliar South American species of



catfish (*Pseudoplatystoma fasciatum*) commonly called a tiger shovelnose. Although this fish was only 11 inches in length,

Above: An aquarium with a volume of 200 gallons or more is recommended for keeping the South American tiger shovelnose catfish. Photo credit: KL.

the knowledgeable store manager told me it could grow to four feet and should have been kept in a large (200-gallon-plus) aquarium. As in many instances of piscine abandonment, this fish quickly outgrew a much smaller home. Fortunately, the owner

found that Marineland would accept their pet and briefly offer it for re-sale, but only to a dedicated fish hobbyist with an aquarium large enough to accommodate its future growth. With no prospects for such a sale, I took the fish away to euthanize it and was left wondering, "Who would want to put this tiger in their tank?"

--Office Mark Steingraeber, R3-LaCrosse FRO

Frog Helps Russian Scientist Win Dubious Distinction

On October 5, the Nobel Prize Committee announced that Professor Andre Geim and Professor Konstantin Novoselov won the Nobel Prize for Physics for special form of carbon: graphene. With that, Geim, a professor of Innovative Materials and Nanoscience at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands became the first individual to win *both* the Nobel Prize and the Ig Nobel Prize. The Ig Nobel is the celebrated, yet perhaps dubious annual award

bestowed by Improbable Research, an organization dedicated to fun science. Their goal is to "first make people laugh, and then make them think".

Below: Bewildered. USFWS photo.



Geim won the Ig Nobel in 2000 for his study: *Of Flying Frogs and Levitrons*. The Russian born physicist makes the frog levitate in a magnetic field due to the diamagnetic (repels magnetic fields) nature of water and frogs, like people are made mostly of water. The result is an amphibian in the air!

To view the video visit:
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130353581>
<http://blogs.physicstoday.org/thedayside/2010/10/a-nobel-prize-for-levitating-a-frog.htm>.

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs

Great Lakes Continued

is never an easy task. Add to that the perspectives of four federal agencies, a corporation, and a non-profit all with different missions...and you have a very slow moving beast. Hesitancy comes when the realization that focused attention on the most important things means that some good “non-priority” projects will be overlooked. If in forsaking these projects, however, our program ultimately produces more meaningful and measurable outcomes then it’s worth it. Right? Which priorities facilitate the greatest diversity of partners, provide long term funding support for the program, contribute to a broad distribution of projects across the basin, provide habitat for our trust species, etc.?

These challenging questions are some the team grappled with.

While the group made good strides forward, future meetings are planned to move us toward setting firm goals for our program and priorities that can be shared with partners.

The meeting ended after a day afield getting a first-hand look at what the program has supported in the past. Over the years field visits have been referred to as “boon doggles” or just an excuse to get out of the office and enjoy some sunshine. I must say it is nice to feel the sun on my face and hear the rustling of oak leaves, but these field trips offer so much more. This trip re-acquainted me with the ecology and biology of the area, exposed me to new restoration techniques, and served as a venue to meet a new partner. In addition, there is nothing like a day in the field to

help form relationships with others. There’s something about kicking the dirt together that really helps people to bond. These relationships often make the tough conversations (such as which priorities to set) a little easier. The group was treated to seeing restored oak savanna at Bur Oak Woods and sand prairie at the John Merle Coulter Nature Preserve in northwest Indiana. Both sites are owned and managed by Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

For more information about the Sustain Our Great Lakes program administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation please visit: www.sustainourgreatlakes.org. Interested parties can also contact Christie Deloria or Amy McGovern to discuss potential project ideas.

--Christie Deloria
R3-East Lansing FO

Volunteer Group Helps Karner Blue Butterfly Continued

and two Service interns. Including the 13 volunteers, a total of 30 people helped with Karner blue recovery work in Wisconsin in 2010. Over the next year, the emerging Karner blue volunteer network hopes to develop a website for communication among volunteers and to involve more Wisconsin citizens at more survey sites.

The Friends of Crex Meadows State Wildlife Area near Grantsburg, a thriving volunteer organization, are a partner on the project. Their group serves

Below: Karner Blue Butterfly. USFWS photo.



as a model for the network’s development with the goal to grow similar networks around each

of the eight Karner blue biological recovery zones in Wisconsin. The program also intends to explore the possibility of allowing trained citizens to “adopt” specific sites and is considering ways in which the volunteer network could also be a fund raising tool. Under the dedicated leadership of Tracy Lee Karner, the Karner Blue Butterfly Volunteer Network is anticipated to expand in Wisconsin in coming years- along with populations of Karner blues!

--Jennifer Resch, R3-Green Bay FO

USFWS Final Strategic Plan for Climate Change

“Rising to the Urgent Challenge: Strategic Plan for Responding to Accelerating Climate Change,” creates a framework within which the Service will work as part of the conservation community to help ensure the sustainability of fish, wildlife, plants and habitats in the face of accelerating climate change. An action plan accompanies the Strategic Plan and details steps the Service is taking now – and during the next five years – to implement the plan.

To view copies of the final strategic plan in its entirety, visit <https://inside.fws.gov/go/post/Climate-Change-Strategic-Plan>.

The priorities chart an ambitious course for the agency’s climate change efforts during the 18-month period from March 2010 through September 2011, focusing on these key areas:

- **Leadership and Management**
- **Adaptation**
- **Mitigation**
- **Engagement**





Regional Office

2010 Duck Stamp Challenge

The epic challenge to see which office can sell the most Duck Stamps is back, so **BRING IT ON!** It's the **Geeksters vs. GooseFarmers vs. ShoutOuts vs. LawDogs vs. FishHeads vs. CraneTrackers vs. the Protectors!** It's no holds barred, all-against-all, every office for itself! Who will sell the most...and prevail? The deadline to purchase, and be counted, is January 31, 2011. Buy your stamp from Margie Maldonado in Visitor Services!

Buy a Duck Stamp, Junior Duck Stamp, or both! After your purchase contact Duck Stamp Challenge coordinator, Ashley Spratt, by e-mail (ashley_spratt@fws.gov) or phone (612/713-5314), so that your purchase is counted!



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius thanks Jane Hodgins for purchasing a duck stamp. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.



Regional Director Tom Melius at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge for the Ramsar designation event. USFWS photo by Tina Shaw.



International Waters Chinese Converse with U.S. on Conservation Issues

reserves. “We have been able to share knowledge about our agency’s National Wildlife Refuge System and Visitor’s Services programs, to help them accommodate this growing demand, said Kohl.

The U.S. - China Nature Conservation Protocol exchange program is just one of several international exchange programs facilitated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Above: Participants at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery in Wisconsin during a visit from the Chinese delegation. Yangtze River.



Above: The Chinese delegation and their American hosts in front of the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago.



Yangtze River.

“The opportunity to interact with our international counterparts on a face-to-face basis is rare, but it is so important,” Kohl said. “Not only for the lessons it teaches us about conservation; but also the lessons it teaches us about cooperation between cultures.”

-- Ashley Spratt
External Affairs



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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

November 2010

Connecting Kids with Nature



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

Muscatatuck NWR Hosts Public Lands Day Clean Up

Muscatatuck NWR celebrated National Public Lands Day with a volunteer “clean-up” of the refuge. A small but dedicated group of 11 cleaned fishing areas, landscaped around the visitor center, cleaned

in Myers Cabin (old log cabin), and removed autumn olive sprouts from the Chestnut Ridge Trail. A home-cooked lunch was provided the volunteers courtesy of the refuge friends group, and the

refuge looked significantly better at the end of the day. --Office Donna Stanley, R3-Muscatatuck NWR

Finnish Hunters Learn about USA Conservation

The Finnish Hunters’ Central Organization (governmental organization on wildlife management and hunting) sent three waterfowl management



Above: The Finnish delegation enjoying the sights and sounds of 150,000 waterfowl while at the Rice Lake observation tower with Walt Ford, refuge manager, while visiting Rice Lake NWR. USFWS photo.

professionals to North America, including a stopover in the Twin Cities, to learn about conservation and habitat management strategies underway in the U.S.

The group learned about the different features of farmland habitat sites in Southwestern Minnesota, problematic lake areas around Brainerd and the habitat management efforts in the North Shore area. In Finland the majority of arable land is in South-western part of the country. The central part is dominated by a vast network of lakes and North-eastern part is vast wilderness just like in Northern Minnesota. Finland is



Above: Jason Ekstein (right), from The Nature Conservancy, joined refuge staff in touring members of the Finn delegation at Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge. USFWS photo.

the most important nesting area for the waterfowl populations in European Union.

--Ashley Spratt
External Affairs

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