



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

# **Inside Region 3**

## **2010 Employee Excellence Awards**



**April 2010**

**And the Winners Are....**



**Dan Burleson (LE), Carol Fix (RO),  
Drew McDermott (RO), Tracy Hill (Columbia FRO),  
Graig Swedenborg (RO), Teddy Roosevelt (Namesake),  
Tom Melius (Presenter),  
Gary Van Vreede (Green Bay ESFO),  
Becky Clearwater (Columbia ESFO),  
David Ellis (Fergus Falls WMD),  
Christie Deloria (ELFO), Brian Lubinski (NWRS),  
David Swanson (RO),  
Joel Trick (GBFO) (Not Pictured),  
Steve Warner (Not Pictured)**

## *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:*

USFWS Photo by Tim Patronski.

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*The RD encourages recognition and reward.*

By Tom Melius



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*Administrative professionals are recognized and celebrated.*

By Valerie Rose Redmond



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*FWS flood recovery efforts highlighted.*

By Larry Dean



### **2010 Employee Appreciation Awards/ 11**

*A Photo Journal.*

Photos by Tim Patronski

# R

## ecognition

This year, the conservation world lost one of its most dynamic leaders with the passing of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Sam Hamilton. It is important that we recognize and honor his contributions. Sam was not only a visionary within the Service family, but he was also a respected and admired leader in the global conservation community.

Rowan Gould stepped in as Acting Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service earlier this year to assume Sam's role, and I am confident in Rowan's leadership and stamina to carry forward on the course set by Sam.

Sam recognized the scope of the challenges we face to our mission - climate change, invasive species, water scarcity and habitat fragmentation, and he also recognized the incredible importance of the people who are working to resolve these conservation issues.

That's why this month's 2010 Midwest Region Employee Excellence Awards presentation meant so much to me. Charlie and I wanted to set some time aside to show a little appreciation back for all the good work that you do. We presented a series of awards to recognize some outstanding efforts that truly enhanced the effectiveness of our conservation mission.

Brian Lubinski was presented with the Customer Service Award (Internal) for putting the

customer first, providing customer service across program lines and improving employee morale.

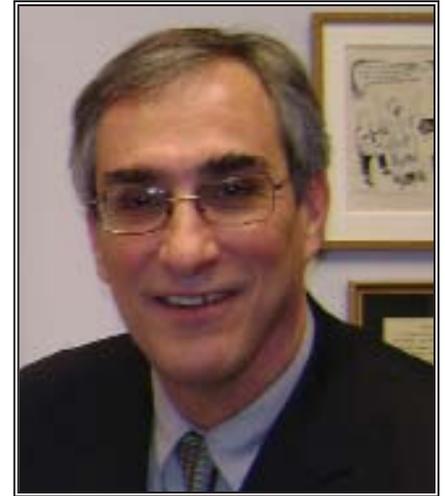
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Christie Deloria and Joel Trick were presented with the Fostering Partnerships Award for working collaboratively with public and private partners to promote the recovery of Kirtland's warblers through the development of new partnerships with forest managers.

Becky Clearwater was presented with the Award for Outreach Excellence for creating a novel program designed to "develop an appreciation for and heighten awareness of nature and the outdoors" in elementary school students.

David Ellis was presented with the Sense of Wonder Nominee for National Award for his dedication to environmental education by integrating nature into the core curriculum of middle school students and using the outdoor world as an effective classroom to reconnect children with nature.



It's vital that we show appreciation to our employees throughout the region. There is a huge correlation between recognition and retention of good people. The heavy correlation between the two suggests that attention must be paid, as loyalty and the retention of good people is a critical factor in the success of our organization. If you are a manager out in the field, project leader, hatchery supervisor, wetland district manager, refuge manager and or field manager, I encourage you to renew and revitalize your employees by following suit.

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

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## ***CELEBRATE CONSERVATION THROUGH THE ARTS!***



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

On April 23, the Science Museum of Minnesota will host the 2010 National Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Show your support for young artists from across the nation by joining us at the Science Museum at 10:00 a.m. for the opening ceremony and judging.

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

Students K-12! Go to [www.fws.gov/juniorduck/entrypacket.htm/](http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/entrypacket.htm/) for information on entering the contest.

Teachers! Jumpstart your artists today with the free curriculum available at [www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/curriculumguide.pdf/](http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/curriculumguide.pdf/).

Another supplement providing fun and important background information on the contest is also available at [www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/2003centennialcurriculumguide.pdf/](http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/pdf/2003centennialcurriculumguide.pdf/).

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

# A New Partnership: Neal Smith NWR and Prairie City-Monroe Public Schools

"I am on my mountain in a tree home that people have passed without ever knowing that I am here." These words, spoken by main character Sam Gribley in the novel *My Side of the Mountain*, were considered by fifth grade students from Prairie City/Monroe, Iowa schools as they visited Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) during the month of February. They did not go to a mountain and live in a tree home, but they did visit the prairie and oak savannah of Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) to gain real life experiences which made their study of the novel more real.

With support of school Superintendent Jane Babcock and guidance from teachers Donna Schaudt and Rebecca VerHeul these fifth graders had the opportunity to understand *My Side of the Mountain* in concrete ways through four visits to Neal Smith NWR during the month of February. The Prairie City/Monroe teachers worked in partnership with Prairie Wetlands



Monroe Elementary fifth grader snowshoeing at Neal Smith NWR. Photo by Donna Schaudt.

Learning Center Instructional Systems Specialist David Ellis and Neal Smith Park Rangers Hallie Rasmussen and Al Murray to bring their fifth grade students on these weekly visits to the refuge. The visits were integrated through hands on activities at the refuge with study of the novel *My Side of the Mountain* in the classroom at school. Each week students wrote about their experiences at Neal Smith in a newsletter style report which was sent home to the families of the Prairie City/Monroe fifth graders.

During these four visits, the fifth grade students had the opportunity to make connections that increased their comprehension of the novel by experiencing things similar to what Sam Gribley did in the novel: cold, snow, beauty and wonder of nature, physical challenge, and discovering nature with a knowledgeable adult.

Teachers were able to build understanding of the vocabulary and an in depth comprehension of the novel through the real experiences that their students had at the refuge with plants, animals, winter survival, and snowshoes. One of the best ways to share the significance and success of these visits is to read the writing of the students who experienced four weeks of visiting the refuge themselves. Below are some of their comments:

- "We had to wear layers of clothes to keep warm. When we were outside we saw lots of tracks. Some of the tracks we saw were rabbit, coyote and deer... We also get to go back in the spring."
- "Yes, I love the prairie. Yes, I like nature."



Ranger Al Murray instructs 5th graders from Monroe Elementary about winter survival at Neal Smith NWR. Photo by Donna Schaudt.

- "I liked all the animals living on the beautiful prairie."
- A powerful summary of the impact and effect of the Prairie City/Monroe student visits to Neal Smith is found in one of the snowshoe poems written by Lilly, one of the students:

## Snowshoes

Hard, cold  
Falling, walking, hike  
Snowshoe, boots, snow-pants  
Talking, running,  
Gloves, hats.

Though Neal Smith NWR is not a mountain home, it was a prairie destination for fifth graders to discover in greater depth how nature works on the tallgrass prairie in winter during the month of February 2010. These students and their teachers gained new understanding about how nature works, and a sense of companionship which comes in sharing nature together. It was a true learning experience for both the students and the teachers.

--Molly Stoddard, R3-Fergus Falls  
WMD/PWLC

# Linking Girls to the Land 2010

It was one of the first sunny spring days in 2010 when girl scouts of all ages came to celebrate “Linking Girls to the Land” at the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (NWR). Linking Girls to the Land (LGTTL) is a partnership between the Girl Scouts of America’s Elliott Wildlife Values Project and federal natural resource agencies, initiatives and other partnering organizations. It is also a celebration to recognize the birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This year the girls were able to participate in a number of activities that involved getting them outside, interested, and involved in the prairie. The girls explored the outdoors by hiking the trail and discovering the changing prairie that has started to come alive. They were also stewards by getting their hands dirty in the greenhouse by helping prep for

future spring planting. Some of the older girls spent time building bird houses while the younger daisies and brownies learned about camouflage through games and stories.

It has been a long winter in Iowa this year and this event was a great way to celebrate the much anticipated spring. The girl’s enthusiasm shined through their smiles and by the end of the day they still weren’t ready to go home. It was another victory towards “getting kids outside” and overall just a fun day.

*--Hallie Rasmussen  
Neal Smith NWR*

Below: Service employee Marvin Light shows a girl scout how to use binoculars. USFWS photo.

## Swan Lake NWR Opening Day Ceremony

*Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge celebrated the annual opening of the refuge on March 6.*

*The refuge celebrated in the morning with coffee and donuts at the visitor center, a grand re-opening of the observation tower, a bird walk, hayrides, an antler scoring booth and a live eagle demonstration.*

*After lunch a Daniel Boone Living History presentation was featured along with hunting dog training and another live eagle demonstration.*



# Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center Hosts Unique Training

Northland College and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) have partnered to provide instruction for Ashland High School (AHS) students in the Natural Resource Explorations class. The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center Campus is serving as the venue for the on-going series of AHS field experiences.

The partnership provides Northland students with real life practice in outdoor education and provides AHS students with top notch lessons in environmental education. As a part of the lesson, Fish & Wildlife Service Visitor Services Manager Kevin Lowry gave students an introduction to ornithology. Students learned about the tools necessary for bird watching, learned a bit about the

refuge and potential career opportunities and then headed out onto the boardwalk to view and listen.

Cindy Dillenschneider, the Northland College Outdoor Education Professor who teaches the Program Design and Risk Management Class said of the experience, "Having Northland students at the fitting location of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, working with Ashland High School students and having a talented instructor with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provides an excellent example of how local linkages can be developed to benefit our community."



Kevin Lowry, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service shows a live American Kestrel to Ashland High School students. USFWS photo.

The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center and the Experiential Learning Laboratory located on-site are run by a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Park Service, the Service, the Wisconsin Historical Society, the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Friends of the Center Alliance, Limited. This successful partnership of local, state and federal agencies has provided visitor and education services as well as jobs and job training to people of Wisconsin for over a decade.

*--Jason Maloney, Director,  
Northern Great Lakes Visitor  
Center; Chequamegon-Nicolet  
National Forest*

Below: Ashland High School Students using the spotting scope five stories above the ground at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center. USFWS photo.



# Over \$683,000 in Fish and Wildlife Conservation Grants Awarded To Tribes

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will be funding four Tribal fish and wildlife conservation projects in the Midwest region totaling \$683,927 through the Fiscal Year 2010 Tribal Wildlife Grant (TWG) Program. The following Tribes will receive funding this year: the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin; the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians; and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in Michigan.

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

The Service received 137 proposals this year from Tribes across the country requesting over \$21,000,000 in project funding. 42 projects were funded totaling \$7,112,852. Since 2003, 66 projects totaling over \$8.6 million have been funded in the Midwest region through the TWG Program and the Tribal Landowner Incentive Program. These projects have made a big difference on the ground and have helped build

capacity for tribal management of culturally and ecologically important fish and wildlife species. Please contact Tim Patronski, Midwest Region Native American Liaison, if you have any questions about the TWG Program or the projects funded this year. -- *Tim Patronski, External Affairs*

## RO Engineers Receive Award

Four Midwest engineers were presented with the Excellence in Design and Construction Management Award on March 18 for their attention to detail and for presenting the American people with beautiful buildings that will be a gateway to extraordinary conservation and treasured landscapes.

The following were awarded the prestigious award: Drew McDermott for his work on the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center; Carol Fix for her work on the Neosho National Fish Hatchery Visitor Center; David Swanson for his work on the Mingo National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center; and Craig Swedenborg for his work on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Administrative Headquarters and Visitor Center.

Engineers are extremely important to our process of modernizing and retrofitting our facilities. A project engineer is responsible for managing all aspects of design and construction on a facilities project. Every



Above: Drew McDermott. USFWS photo.



Above: Craig Swedenborg. USFWS photo.



Above: Carol Fix. USFWS photo.



Above David Swanson. USFWS photo.

now and then, the region receives funding for a very large, complex and highly visible project. These projects present unique challenges in that they are very large in scope and there are so many moving parts and pieces. The project engineer must demonstrate an incredible attention to detail.

# Celebrating Administrative Professionals Month

## Life Balance: Elaine Titus and Debbie Kuhn

Elaine Titus and Debbie Kuhn are bringing the balance of life and work back by sharing their job as Administrative Technician at Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

Job sharing allows the two to share a single full-time position, which creates flexibility and freedom in their lives, while still allowing them to keep the prorated benefits and salary.

Each has a two and a half day a week work schedule. The two make it work by dividing their work correspondingly. They have some jobs that only one does and others they do as needed. They alternate days that they work each year so Monday holidays are equally divided. They also

Below: Debbie Kuhn working at the Two Rivers Family Fishing Fair: USFWS photo.



Above: Debbie Kuhn and Elaine Titus working at the Volunteer Banquet. USFWS photo.

alternate some jobs, such as payroll and reconciling credit cards. Even though they do specific jobs, they are trained in all areas of their job description.

Kuhn is responsible for personnel actions, property, ADP support, time cards, travel training, web updates, purchasing, and bill pay. Kuhn also acts as a fire dispatcher, greet visitors, and does whatever else needs to be done in the office.

Titus tracks expenditures, projects future costs and provides budget updates to the manager; reconciles BTS reports and monthly credit card statements, makes sure credit cards are charged to the proper funds, collects and transmits funds for federal pass programs and federal duck stamps, pays bills, greets visitors, and helps others in the office with anything they need.

Born in Golden Eagle, Ill., Titus joined the U. S. Fish and Wildlife



# Celebrating Administrative Professionals Month

## Life Balance: Elaine Titus and Debbie Kuhn

Service (Service) in April of 1991. She says she was attracted to the Service because she hadn't worked outside of her home since 1981 when she adopted her son, Brian, who was six at the time. She did bookkeeping and tax preparation from her home so she could be home when her son got off the school bus. "I really wasn't

asked what attracted her to the Service, Kuhn says, "The first thing was that this job was only four miles away from my house and it was 24 hours a week. I liked the idea of wearing a uniform then I would not need to worry about what I was going to wear to work." Kuhn says she was going to the local community college and was

splitting a work week between two employees. It's a creative way to retain employees by allowing them to more effectively balance work and family lifestyles while still accomplishing the mission of the Service.

-- Valerie Rose Redmond  
*External Affairs*



Above: Elaine Titus working at an Open House at Two Rivers NWR. USFWS photo.

looking for a job when my sister, Barb, told me she saw an advertisement at the store in town for a job at the refuge and she thought it was just the right job for me," says Titus. "I took a test, went in for an interview and got the job."

Kuhn, a San Diego native, joined the Service in July of 1983. When

in her second year about to obtain her AAS degree in accounting. Her dad worked for the Illinois Department of Transportation. A refuge manager told her dad that the employee who had worked the clerical position was leaving and wanted to know if she was interested in applying for the job. So she did.

Job sharing is much more than

## Refuge Week 2010

October 10-16

Promotional materials have not yet been developed, but we would love to hear from you about what is useful. We may not be able to provide it all, but we certainly will give your suggestions serious attention.

Give your ideas to Martha Nudel, chief, Branch of Communications, 703-358-1858 or [Martha\\_Nudel@fws.gov](mailto:Martha_Nudel@fws.gov).

# 2010 Employee Excellence Awards

## Photo Journal: A Window into History in the Making

### The Winners



Brian Lubinski - NWRS (Top Left);  
Christie Deloria - ELFO  
(Top Center);  
Becky Clearwater - Columbia ESFO  
(Below);  
and  
Joel Trick (Bottom Left);



Tracy Hill - Columbia FRO  
(Top, Right);  
Dan Burleson - LE (Below),  
Steve Warner (Bottom, Right);  
and  
Gary Van Vreede  
(Green Bay ESFO);



**Dave Ellis (Above) of Fergus  
Falls WMD garnered  
the much coveted  
Sense of Wonder Award.**



# 2010 Employee Excellence Awards

## Photo Journal: A Window into History in the Making



### The Pre-Party



Photos by Valerie Rose Redmond.

In honor of Employee Appreciation Day, the Regional Director encouraged managers and supervisors throughout the region to hold a potluck for their employees. The potluck at the Regional Office took the form of a “pre-party” and was held in the Regional Office conference room where guests of Regional Director Tom Melius were treated to pizza and bubbly soda pop.



# 2010 Employee Excellence Awards

## Photo Journal: A Window into History in the Making

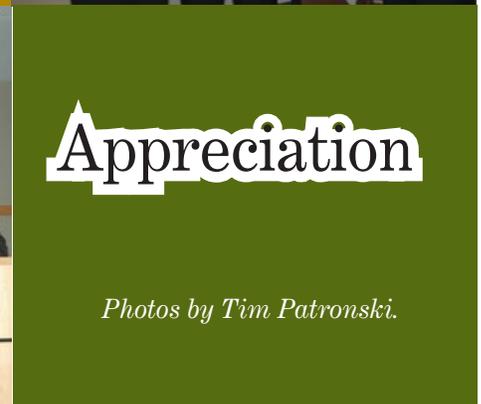
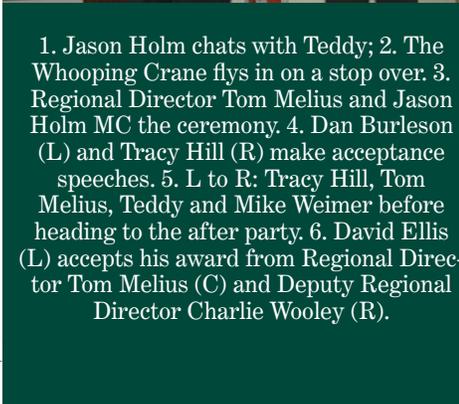
**M**idwest Region Director Tom Melius and Deputy Region Director Charlie Wooley set aside March 18 as a day to recognize and show appreciation to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees throughout the region. The 2010 Midwest Region Employee Excellence Award ceremony mirrored that of the recent Academy Awards and marked the first time such an event took place in the region. Service nominees competed with the likes of Angelina Jolie, Morgan Freeman, Spock and the Blue

Guy from Avatar. The pre-party was held in the Regional Office Conference room where guests were treated to pizza and bubbly soda pop. In the end, Service nominees prevailed, sweeping all of the coveted Roosevelt Awards.

Brian Lubinski was awarded the Customer Service Award (Internal) for putting the customer first, and providing customer service across program lines, enhancing employee morale and the effectiveness of our conservation mission.

Gary Van Vreede was awarded the Customer Service Award (Internal) for exploring and implementing methods to provide excellent customer service to external partners and customers, your actions reflect positively on the Service mission.

Dan Burleson and Tracy Hill were awarded the Teamwork Award for using innovative methods and teamwork to successfully conduct enforcement actions on the Missouri River in the defense of the unlawful capture of endangered pallid sturgeon.



1. Jason Holm chats with Teddy; 2. The Whooping Crane flies in on a stop over. 3. Regional Director Tom Melius and Jason Holm MC the ceremony. 4. Dan Burleson (L) and Tracy Hill (R) make acceptance speeches. 5. L to R: Tracy Hill, Tom Melius, Teddy and Mike Weimer before heading to the after party. 6. David Ellis (L) accepts his award from Regional Director Tom Melius (C) and Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley (R).

*Photos by Tim Patronski.*

# 2010 Employee Excellence Awards

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Christie Deloria and Joel Trick were awarded the Fostering Partnerships Award for working collaboratively with public and private partners to promote recovery of Kirtland's warblers through the development of new partnerships with forest managers.

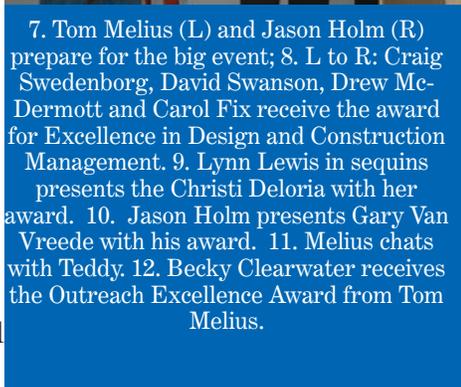
Becky Clearwater was given the Award for Outreach Excellence for creating a novel program designed to "develop an appreciation for and heighten awareness of nature and the outdoors" in elementary school students.

Steve Warner was awarded the Golden Hammer award for his professionalism of our refuge program maintenance staff and their significant contributions to the refuge system. And the following engineers received the Award for Excellence in Design and Construction Management:

Drew McDermott for his work on the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center; Carol Fix for her work on the Neosho National Fish Hatchery Visitor Center; David Swanson for his work on the Mingo National Wildlife

Refuge Visitor Center; and Craig Swedenborg for his work on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge Administrative Headquarters and Visitor Center.

Finally, David Ellis was awarded the Sense of Wonder Nominee for National Award for dedication to environmental education by integrating nature into the core curriculum of middle school students and using the outdoor world as an effective classroom by reconnecting children with a natural environment.



7. Tom Melius (L) and Jason Holm (R) prepare for the big event; 8. L to R: Craig Swedenborg, David Swanson, Drew McDermott and Carol Fix receive the award for Excellence in Design and Construction Management. 9. Lynn Lewis in sequins presents the Christi Deloria with her award. 10. Jason Holm presents Gary Van Vreede with his award. 11. Melius chats with Teddy. 12. Becky Clearwater receives the Outreach Excellence Award from Tom Melius.

# 2010 Employee Excellence Awards

## Photo Journal: A Window into History in the Making

The ceremony's big winner was J.C. Penny whose stylish designs strutted down the red carpet on the backs of Wooley, Lubinski and Jason Holm. The three credited

the world renown designer when asked who they were wearing.

-- Valerie Rose Redmond  
External Affairs



14.



15.



16.



7.



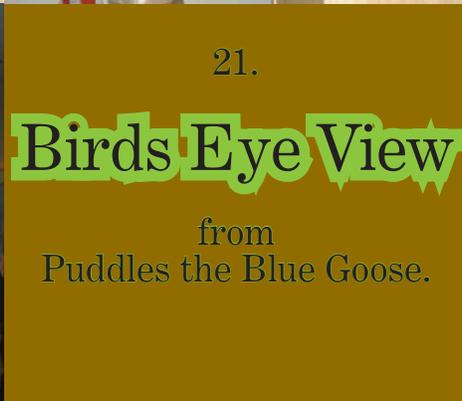
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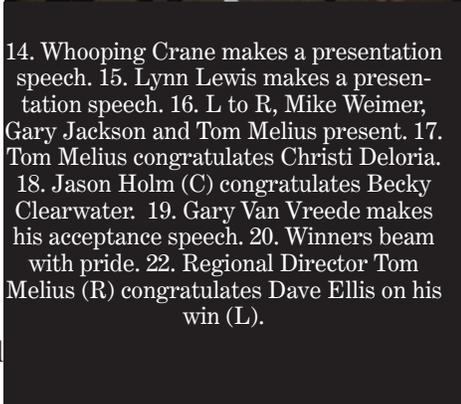
21.

**Birds Eye View**

from  
Puddles the Blue Goose.



21.



22.



14. Whooping Crane makes a presentation speech. 15. Lynn Lewis makes a presentation speech. 16. L to R, Mike Weimer, Gary Jackson and Tom Melius present. 17. Tom Melius congratulates Christi Deloria. 18. Jason Holm (C) congratulates Becky Clearwater. 19. Gary Van Vreede makes his acceptance speech. 20. Winners beam with pride. 22. Regional Director Tom Melius (R) congratulates Dave Ellis on his win (L).

# Around the Region

## A Dedicated Career: Larry Wargowsky

Larry Wargowsky has dedicated his work life to protecting and restoring the wild things in nature. This work not only has benefited wildlife but also people who hunt, fish, birdwatch, photograph wildlife, hike and routinely look to outdoor recreation as part of their quality of life. His work was also a benefit to the local and regional economy by creating job opportunities and economic development projects and generating tourist dollars to the local area.

Wargowsky has truly distinguished himself and his community in many ways over in his 31 years of public service. His first career experience started with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. His activities included raising musky fingerlings at the Black River Falls fish hatchery and catching ducks at night with an airboat at Horicon Marsh where he had a record catch of 94 mallards in two hours one night!

Wargowsky then got a job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) at Seney National Wildlife Refuge in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. While at Seney Larry was the Work Coordinator of the Young Adults Conservation Corps with 100 corps members plus crew leaders stationed at various locations throughout Michigan. This no doubt led to Larry's great interest in educating youth and building the next generation of conservation supporters.

Larry next moved to Ohio and worked at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge complex on the shore of Lake Erie as the pri-

mary assistant manager. While there he managed five units of the Cedar Point and West Sister Island National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). Larry coordinated a million dollar per mile levee repair project along Lake Erie and construction of a major pumping station for water management.

Larry moved again to Illinois. At the Savanna District of the Upper Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge he was the District Manager for 12 years for 90 miles of the Mississippi River in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin. During his tenure there he worked with three state agencies and two U. S. Army Corps of Engineer districts coordinating and designing multi-million dollar Environmental Management Projects. Larry also coordinated the planning for a bike trail spur and new visitor center adjacent to the Mississippi River. He received an Illinois Conservation Merit Award for his part in an innovative project that involved a helicopter dropping power poles for nesting platforms for endangered species. Hopefully they missed the endangered species when they dropped the power poles!!

Larry's last career move was back to his home town of Necedah in August of 1995. He has been instrumental in many changes at the Necedah Refuge over the past 14 years as well as witnessing many changes in wildlife species present on the refuge. A few of the projects he was responsible for included the rehabilitation of both



Above: Larry Wargowsky celebrates his retirement. USFWS photo.

Rynearson Dam one and two at \$4 million dollars. Both are considered high hazard dams above the Village of Necedah so that repair has significantly protected the local community.

A little known fact was that the Rynearson Dams project won a national honor award, the second highest award given out by the American Council of Engineering Companies. Other construction projects included the Ellen Allan classroom, a new shop building, a new heated fire cache building the construction of a new bunkhouse for volunteers and college interns.

As Larry moves on to the next phase of his life, his impact from his 15 year tenure as the Refuge Manager of Necedah (NWR) was a benefit not only the wildlife, habitat, and the infrastructure of the refuge but the people both near and far beyond the refuge border. He and his staff have helped put Necedah on the map nationally and internationally as well as boosting the local economy.

--John Christian, Assistant Regional Director – Migratory Birds and State Programs

# Service Flood Recovery Efforts

With this year's significant winter snow melt and additional spring precipitation, flooding is currently impacting many areas in the Midwest, from the Dakotas into Iowa. The Midwest region is both preparing for and participating in flood recovery efforts with other national and state agencies. The Midwest Regional Flood Response web site is provided as a source for information on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) staff and equipment being deployed to combat this challenging national event to help minimize damage to people, property and natural resources. Below are updates on the current activities of our staff in assisting in flood recovery in our region and neighboring regions throughout this seasonal event.

## March 25, 2010 Update

With water levels having crested in most flooding locations and beginning to recede back to normal levels, the regional flood response team has declared a stand down in operations. Good news for those who worried of worsening conditions from winter melting, potential ice jams and additional precipitation. The team will continue to monitor reports should new flooding threats become a possibility from spring rains that undoubtedly still may come and swell water levels once again. But the threat of the one-two punch of precipitation and the winter melt has pretty much subsided for the Dakotas on southward to Iowa.

Regional Safety Specialist Robert McGinn expressed his thanks



Above: Participants in the Winter Airboat Safety Course prepare for operating their watercraft on icy waters in advance of the Midwest flooding events. The class dealt with winter airboat operations and pending flood response scenarios. Photos by Owen Johnson.

to Incident Commander Dan Dearborn, Regional Watercraft Safety Officer Dave Wedan, and Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator Dale Pitman, for their outstanding efforts to make sure areas in both our Region and Region 6 had the support necessary to respond to the constantly changing conditions on the ground throughout this seasonal event. While this season's flooding might not have been as busy and highly impacting as previous years, much credit for that goes to the preparation that was evident from the start thanks to their hard work and the work of others who took part in various actions, such as sandbagging prior to water levels rising to dangerous levels.

Among the final river areas to reach their crest was the Mississippi River, impacting areas near downtown St. Paul and further south to the Hastings,

Minn., lock and dam. Those crests arrived with little damage and water levels are expected to recede below flood stage by the weekend. Conditions in the Dakotas have improved to the minor flood stage levels with water continuing to recede. In Iowa flood levels also remain at minor flooding levels with water expected to continue to recede through the weekend and no major rains expected to impact the region through the weekend.

## March 17, 2010 Update

As waters have already begun spilling over river banks in parts of Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas, the Service is not only monitoring the impacts but preparing to confront them in efforts to lessen the damage to people, property and natural resources. As of March 17, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has yet to declare an emergency for Minnesota and Iowa, however they have declared a state of emergency

# Service Flood Recovery Efforts



Above: Participants in the Winter Airboat Safety Course prepare for operating their watercraft on icy waters in advance of the Midwest flooding events. The class dealt with winter airboat operations and pending flood response scenarios. Photos by Owen Johnson.

in North and South Dakota where water levels are expected to crest as early as Friday, March 19, in some places, including the Red River, in the Fargo, North Dakota and Moorhead, Minnesota areas.

In Minnesota, the National Weather Service has forecast flood warnings, with severity increased from moderate to major in many areas including the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area,

where waters are expected to exceed flood stage by Saturday, March 20.

Initial preparations by Midwest region staff include performing inventory of equipment that might be of use in flood response as well as personnel to assist. To date, the region has not mobilized either airboats or staff to effected areas, however the Service's Region 6 has received a FEMA request

to provide airboats to the Cass County, Minn., area impacted by high waters.

Dan Dearborn has been appointed as the Incident Commander for Service flood activities in Western Minnesota. Service staff are deep into the steps of planning for rapid response as ground conditions warrant. Dave Wedan, La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Regional Watercraft Safety Officer, and Dale Pittman, Illinois River NWR, Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator, have been working to coordinate Midwest region staffing, airboats, operators, mechanics and additional heavy equipment that may be needed to confront the flooding that is expected to further pour over into parts of Minnesota and Iowa in the days ahead.

Refuge and Wetland Management District staffs from various locations, including Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls, Minn., have already been assisting locally with sandbag efforts.

--Larry Dean  
*External Affairs*

Above: Participants in the Winter Airboat Safety Course prepare for operating their watercraft on icy waters in advance of the Midwest flooding events. The class dealt with winter airboat operations and pending flood response scenarios. Photos by Owen Johnson.





## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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

# Recognition and Appreciation Flood Stand Down

I would like to express appreciation also to Brian Pember, Bill Thrune, Bridget Olson, Robert Bengson, Ron Beam, Wendy Woyczik, Sally Zodrow, Duane King, Kim Bousquet, and each of their supervisors. These nine airboat operators, with their supervisors support, immediately stepped-up to the flood response threat, and they carried on with their normal duties while prepared and knowing they were a phone call away from being the first wave of Region 3 air boaters deployed to North Dakota or Minnesota if requested. Thanks to all of you, and the many field station supervisors and watercraft operators who have cooperated and responded to my requests for resource information in preparation for present and future responses.

*--Dave Wedan  
Regional Watercraft Safety Coordinator  
La Crosse National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office*

I have spoken with Dan Dearborn and we agreed that we should stand down the Region 3 Flood IC. The threat of additional flooding has diminished along the Red River and other rivers throughout MN are receding.

The rivers in Iowa are also receding and none of their rivers are at major flood stage.

I want to thank Dan Dearborn, Dave Wedan, and Dale Pittman for all their work during this event. I also want to thank all our staff that volunteered and their supervisors. Their support is greatly appreciated as it makes it easier to respond. It is a team effort and everyone plays an important role during these events.

*Robert McGinn  
US Fish and Wildlife Service - Region 3  
Safety Specialist/Industrial Hygienist*

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