

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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July 2011



Detroit River

INTERNATIONAL

fish and
management

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On the Cover:

Recently confirmed U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe (left) joined Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar (center) and Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius (right) at Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge on July 6. Secretary Salazar visited the refuge to announce recent land acquisitions that will protect valuable habitats and provide recreational opportunities for the urban community. This is the Director's first visit to a field station since he was confirmed as the Service's 16th Director on June 30.



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American Recreation Coalition 2011 Beacon Award shines bright on Midwest.

By Tina Shaw

Summer Activity

I write to you from the desk of my new office at the Norman Pointe II building in Bloomington, Minn. I would like to again extend my heartfelt thanks to the many regional employees whose contributions helped us to have a remarkably smooth transition into our new space. It's a beautiful area. Summer is thriving all around us, as are the activities that go hand in hand with it.

Public recreation moves into high gear at this time of year. Prompted by the warm sun and the blooming greenery, many Americans will be looking for fun ways to get out and enjoy the outdoors. It's a wonderful opportunity for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to highlight the recreational value of our regional field stations. There is something for everyone. Whether its birding, fishing or walking through a wooded path on the refuge, the American public must be reminded that we are servicing these lands for them. Our public lands feature breathtakingly beautiful country sides, woodlands, lakes and rivers throughout the region, all of which await to be hiked, fished and explored. The Service's outreach efforts are of the utmost importance because public lands are just that. These resources belong to the public and the public is welcome.

Also continuing to move forward at a fast pace are Landscape Conservation Cooperatives. The Upper Midwest and Great Lakes LCC and the Plains and Prairie Potholes LCC Steering Committees recently reviewed needed projects submitted though the Cooperatives and approved nearly \$2 million in funding to help address shared science needs. In addition, we just announced the selection of Glen Salmon as the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie and Big Rivers LCC Coordinator. More information on all the projects funded, as well as LCC updates can be found at: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/climate/LCC.cfm>

Speaking of visioning, the National Wildlife Refuge System will be hosting the Vision Conference this month in Madison, Wis. I'm very excited because not only will this conference focus on conservation design, planning, delivery, science, relevance, and leadership, but it will be carbon-neutral, as well. If you are not planning to travel to Madison due to scheduling conflicts or funding, I just want

to remind you that you can still be there-- virtually! Visit <http://americaswildlife.org/conference/> to learn how you can get connected by watching the conference live online, as well as, tweeting in your questions.

Summer activities for the Service are picking up as well. Among other things, hammers in hand, the crew from our Youth Conservation Corps is on board again. In addition, the Service as a member of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee released its 2011 Asian Carp Monitoring and Rapid Response Plan. You can read more about that on page 5.

I just came back from the St. Croix Wetland Management District, the Iron River National Fish Hatchery, the Ashland Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office and the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge where I took part in a Day of Service at the Prairie Star Waterfowl Production Area and visited with the staff. I also enjoyed the 5th Annual Chequamegon Bay Birding and Nature Festival at Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge. These are the types of activities that are available to people in the community for recreational purposes. So help spread the word!

And finally, as summer activities pick up in the field, I would urge you again that to be careful and safe both when on duty and off.

Wishing you a safe and happy summer!

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



The Missouri River flood plain community pulled together to secure historic Bertrand Collection. Regional Director Tom Melius inspects temporary levee. Service photo by Refuge Pilot Brian Lubinski.

Regional Director Tom Melius Visits Wisconsin

Last month, Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius visited with staff from St. Croix Wetland Management District, Iron River National Fish Hatchery, the Ashland Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office and Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge.

Highlights of the trip included participating in the New Richmond High School Day of Service at the Prairie Flats South Waterfowl Production Area, touring the Iron River National Fish Hatchery and the 5th Annual Chequamegon Bay Birding and Nature Festival.

Also of keen importance was the opportunity for the Regional Director to meet with staff from each station and discuss emerging topics and issues.

--Tina Shaw
External Affairs



Above: Area 3 Refuge Supervisor Jim Leach (l) visits with Agri-Science Instructor and FFA Advisor Rachel Sauvola (c) and Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius (r); St. Croix WMD.

Below: Fish and Wildlife Biologist Mike Mlynarek (l) discussing management issues with Tom Melius (r) along Lake Superior at Whittlesey Creek NWR. Service photos by Tina Shaw.



Above: Regional Director Tom Melius learning first hand about the Iron River National Fish Hatchery. Service photo by Tina Shaw.

2011 Asian Carp Monitoring and Rapid Response Plan Released

The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee recently released its 2011 Asian Carp Monitoring and Rapid Response Plan, outlining an aggressive set of actions to track and remove Asian carp in the Upper Illinois River and the Chicago Area Waterway System to prevent this invasive species from establishing in the Great Lakes.

In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with federal and state partners executed an aggressive, coordinated Asian carp monitoring and sampling strategy, dedicating more than 16,000 hours to surveying and removing Asian carp in more than 200 miles of Illinois waterway. On-the-ground actions ranged from cutting-edge scientific analysis of water samples for Asian carp DNA to intensive use of traditional fishing methods such as electro-fishing and netting. These actions were part of a comprehensive, multi-tiered Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework first released in May 2010. The 2011 plan summarizes the monitoring results from 2010, continues and intensifies these monitoring and sampling actions to take advantage of new technology, tools and understanding of this invasive species, and outlines a strategy for rapid response in the event an Asian carp is found above the barrier system. "This plan represents an intensive and collaborative response to Asian carp



Charlie Wooley (l) talks to the media about the importance of the 2011 Monitoring and Rapid Response Plan. ACRCC Photo.

in Illinois waters and is a key part of the Obama Administration's comprehensive and long term strategy to protect our Great Lakes from Asian carp," said John Goss, Asian Carp Director for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "By unifying federal and state action, conducting vigilant monitoring, and developing and using cutting edge technologies, we are ensuring the most coordinated and effective response at all levels to safeguard the health of the Great Lakes and Great Lakes communities." The 2011 plan represents an estimated \$7 million federal investment and is designed

with the flexibility to respond to new threats. The Service, as an active member of the ACRCC, continues to provide support to the ACRCC and foster coordination between federal, state, tribal and non-government office partners in the fight against Asian carp.

*--Kaitlin Steiger-Meister, Ph.D.
External Affairs and The Asian
Carp Regional Coordinating
Committee*



Left: Charlie Wooley (c) with the Asian Carp Director, John Goss (third from the left), and state and federal partners prepare for a media boat tour of the Chicago Area Waterway System. ACRCC Photo.

After the Storm: Joplin, Mo.

On May 22, a devastating EF-5 tornado struck the town of Joplin, Mo. The following are accounts from staff at the neighboring Neosho National Fish Hatchery.

There was a 9 p.m. curfew on Monday-Thursday after the storm. Empire Electric worked quickly to restore power to the main streets and neighborhoods. Police came from places like Tulsa and St. Louis to help keep the streets safe and prevent looting.

We saw some horrible things. I did have my fiance take a photo while I was driving. The photos are just too real and I do feel guilty taking photos since there are just hundreds of houses reduced to rubble. So too was the Catholic church we attend. Our priest was hiding in the bathtub during the tornado. The rectory also collapsed on him but luckily parishioners helped him dig out of the mess. Also my house was directly in line with the tornado's path but it drifted southeast as it was leaving the city limits. I think we all feel very fortunate that we didn't lose our lives or our possessions. We all know it could have been one of us or our loved ones eating at Pizza Hut or

shopping at Home Depot on that Sunday night.

My fiance and I have friends that were caught in the tornado.

diaper wipes, blankets, towels, washcloths, children's underwear and sandals, adult underwear, flip flops, and nonperishable food items. We also know that there



Twisted metal after the storm, Joplin, Mo. Service photo.

They were painting the inside of a building meant to be a gym for children. The gym was set to open June 11. Our friends survived the tornado in their truck which was parked inside the gym. Sadly the place is only a concrete slab now and the truck was destroyed. The good news is that our friends walked away with only few scrapes and bruises.

Jaime Pacheco, Neosho National Fish Hatchery biologist, volunteered with Americorps. He helped pick up some of the debris. My fiance and I plan to volunteer again. At present, we are awaiting additional duties. Many donation came in to aid the cause. These included things like diapers,

will be a future need for volunteers so I speak for Jaime and myself when I say that we will continue to volunteer outside of work every chance we get. --Melissa Cheung, biologist at Neosho National Fish Hatchery

During my time off I signed up as a volunteer to help with the debris removal from the tornado that struck Joplin, Mo. I mostly removed trees and put in a lot of chainsaw time. I also donated some food and clothes. A lot of work still needs to be done. I expect to continue to volunteer as much as I can during the coming months.

--Jaime Pacheco, biologist at Neosho National Fish Hatchery

American Recreation Coalition 2011 Shines Bright on Midwest

Visitor Services Manager at the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Pam Steinhaus, brings the Beacon Award back to the Midwest for her innovative use of technology as an outreach tool. Steinhaus was honored at the Great Outdoors Week kick-off event by the American Recreation Coalition on June 13 at U.S. Department of Agriculture patio in Washington, D.C.

Steinhaus, in coordination with the Refuge Friends group, Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge, implemented an information technology strategy that better connects visitors with the southern portion of the refuge and provide visitors enhanced access to recreational and wildlife resources.

The Beacon Award, sponsored by the American Recreation Coalition, is presented to conservation professionals who excel in the field of technology and is jointly awarded to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and Federal Highways.

Steinhaus and SUMRR are using contemporary technologies to fulfill mutual outreach goals; specifically, to enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of the Upper Mississippi River NWR and as a result, are furthering the mission and programs of the Service. Steinhaus and her Friends have much to celebrate and of which to be proud!



Above: American Recreation Coalition 2011 Beacon award winner Pam Steinhaus proudly displays the new wildlife webcams at Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Service Photo.

Previously, federal restrictions to the government computer system prohibited visitors from using refuge computer lines to access the internet. By working with the Friends group to leverage private funding, Steinhaus enabled the refuge to provide Wi-Fi service to the visitors. Visitors can now use their own computers to access websites and download GPS coordinates, which identify Earthcache sites out on the refuge.

In addition, guest speakers can now enhance their presentations at the refuge by accessing their own websites through this non-governmental Wi-Fi system. When the wireless system went live this past March, Steinhaus launched "Curing Cabin Fever III," a special event where attendees brought their own computers and accessed the websites to search for Earthcaches.

The second part of the technology implementation strategy included installing wildlife viewing cams, for remote wildlife observation. Steinhaus

and Friends volunteers spent countless hours installing webcams throughout the southern portion of the refuge (<http://sumriver.org/webcam.html>). With the help of additional partners, including USACE, JC WI-FI (internet provider) and Lucas Communication, the webcams went live March 1. Lucas Communication of Muscatine, Iowa donated the cameras.

One camera is located over the Mississippi River, where virtual visitors

have an opportunity to monitor the winter activities of bald eagles and summer activities of the American White Pelicans, as well as several other water birds (<http://sumriver.org/webcam.html#>).

The second camera is focused on a bald eagle nest (<http://sumriver.org/webcam.html#>). This webcam gives visitors an opportunity to see what happens in the life of a bald eagle. Another camera allows viewers to watch the migration of waterfowl and other animal activities on the backwaters of the Mississippi River (<http://208.86.162.107:8080/CgiStart?page=Single&Language=0>). There are plans to install one more camera that would allow visitors to view a colony of nesting American White Pelicans.

Even though these cameras are located at various points in the refuge, Steinhaus is able to access the camera controls within the visitor center and adjust the cameras as needed. These cameras give refuge visitors unprecedented access to protected habitats and wildlife.

--Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Rehabilitated Eagles Returned to Wild in Wisconsin

The largest and most successful rescue of poisoned eagles ever recorded has come to a dramatic completion today at Antigo, Wis. with the release of seven American bald eagles into the wild by the Raptor Education Group.

The eagles, poisoned at a landfill in Vilas County, were found on the ground and near death on April 9, 2011 when wildlife rehabilitators raced to the scene and transported the eagles to the Raptor Education Group rehabilitation facility in Antigo, Wis. An eighth eagle was found dead at the scene.

The investigation launched by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is ongoing and investigators

cannot comment on the details of the case until it is complete.

“The cause of the poisoning has been determined and is no longer a risk to wildlife or the public,” said USFWS Special Agent Steve Stoinski, the lead investigator.



Above: Eagle photo courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



facility at N2160 W. Rollwood Road, Antigo, Wis. Check out images of the release:

Learn more about bald eagle recovery and the USFWS role in meeting this mission, www.fws.gov/midwest/eagle/recovery/index.html.

The Wisconsin DNR is an important conservation partner of the Service. Learn more about WDNR by visiting, dnr.wi.gov/.

More information about REGI is available by contacting executive director Marge Gibson at 715-623-4015 or by visiting www.raptoreducationgroup.org/

--Tina Shaw
External Affairs

Above: Raptor Education Group Executive Director Marge Gibson and staff assist in banding one of the seven eagles to be released today. Photo courtesy of the Raptor Education Group.

After weeks of intense care, the eagles – three adults and four juveniles – have all recovered from the toxin and are ready to be released back to the wild.

“The Raptor Education Group did an excellent job rehabilitating these birds back to health and we are very pleased to see the eagles returned to the wild,” Stoinski said.

The eagle release took place beginning at 11:00 a.m. June 1 at the Raptor Education Group, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Wis. DNR.

Tomah 21st Annual Fishing Tournament is a Big Hit!

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest Fisheries Program and the Seventh District of the American Legion co-sponsored the 21st Annual Fishing Tournament for veterans and kids on Wednesday, May 18 on the grounds of the Veteran's Administration Medical Center in Tomah, Wis. More than 100 veterans of the U.S. military and 100 seventh grade students from Tomah Middle School enjoyed a morning of fishing, food and friendship with staff from the Service's Genoa National Fish Hatchery, La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office and La Crosse Fish Health Center.



Left: American Legion, Service, and Tomah VA: Celebrating the 21st Tournament! Service photo.

Below: American Legion, Service, and Tomah VA: Celebrating the 21st Tournament! Service photo.

The largest largemouth bass caught was 20.75 inches, and the largest fish caught was a rough fish bowfish measuring in at 21 inches. Genoa National Fish

Hatchery stocked the pond at the VA Medical Center with rainbow trout, largemouth bass, and bluegills.

--Ashley Spratt
External Affairs



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Employees among Civil Servant Honorees

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees Craig Nibbe and Amy McGovern are among federal employees selected as Civil Servants of the Year in Minnesota by the Federal Executive Board.



Nibbe, an environmental engineer, substantially reduced the number of open environmental and greening findings by assisting the region's 150 field stations with regulatory compliance issues.

In McGovern's position as the Fish & Wildlife Service liaison to the Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago, she served as the Service's staff lead for implementing the Service's \$65 million portion of the Administration's \$475 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.



Endangered Species

HCP Nature Park Named for Indiana Bat

Sodalis Nature Park, located on lands protected for the Indiana bat under a habitat conservation plan by the Indianapolis Airport Authority, was dedicated in May and opened to the public. The 209-acre park near Indianapolis is named for the Indiana bat, *Myotis sodalis*, and offers visitors a place to hike, fish and learn more about the endangered bat that inhabits its woods.

Scott Pruitt, project leader for the Service's Bloomington Field Office, said, "We are pleased that not only will Sodalis Nature Park provide a haven for the Indiana bat, it will offer an opportunity for the residents of Hendricks County and beyond to learn about this amazing creature. By sharing their park with the Indiana bat, visitors are actively participating in the conservation of a truly unique Indiana treasure."

--Georgia Parham
External Affairs

Below: Bloomington Field Office Supervisor Scott Pruitt and Biologist Lori Pruitt look over a trail map at newly dedicated Sodalis Nature Park. Service photo by Georgia Parham.



Kirtland's Warbler Milestone

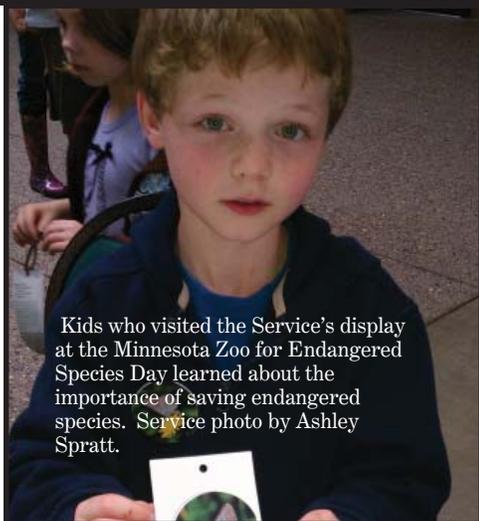
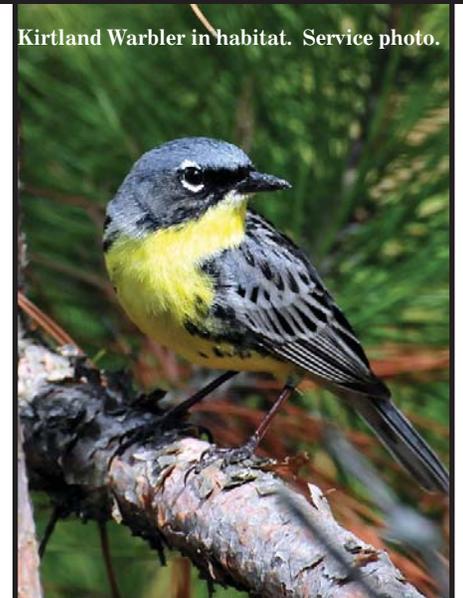
As part of the annual Kirtland's Warbler Festival on May 21 in Roscommon, Mich., the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the U.S. Forest Service signed a Memorandum of Understanding that represents a significant milestone in the conservation of the endangered Kirtland's warbler. Dedicated partners have worked for decades to bring the Kirtland's warbler back from the brink of extinction. Through management of jack pine habitat, cowbird control, public awareness campaigns, research, and

innovative fieldwork, we are very close to achieving our goals.

On hand to sign the agreement were Scott Hicks, Field Supervisor of the Service's Endangered Species field office in East Lansing. "This MOU ensures that this partnership of support and cooperation will continue regardless of the species status, and it brings us an important step closer to taking this species off the endangered species list," said Hicks.

--Georgia Parham,
External Affairs

Kirtland Warbler in habitat. Service photo.



Kids who visited the Service's display at the Minnesota Zoo for Endangered Species Day learned about the importance of saving endangered species. Service photo by Ashley Spratt.

Endangered Species Day

Ecological Services in Region 3 celebrated Earth Day this year with activities around the Region. Among them was a contest for the best "green office" suggestions. Winners were Lori Pruitt of the Bloomington ES office and Jeanine Solberg in the Regional Office, both of whom suggested setting all printers to print two-sided as the default. Minnesota's endangered species were the focus of a Service display at the Minnesota Zoo for Endangered Species Day. Set up near the entrance to the zoo's Tropics Trail,

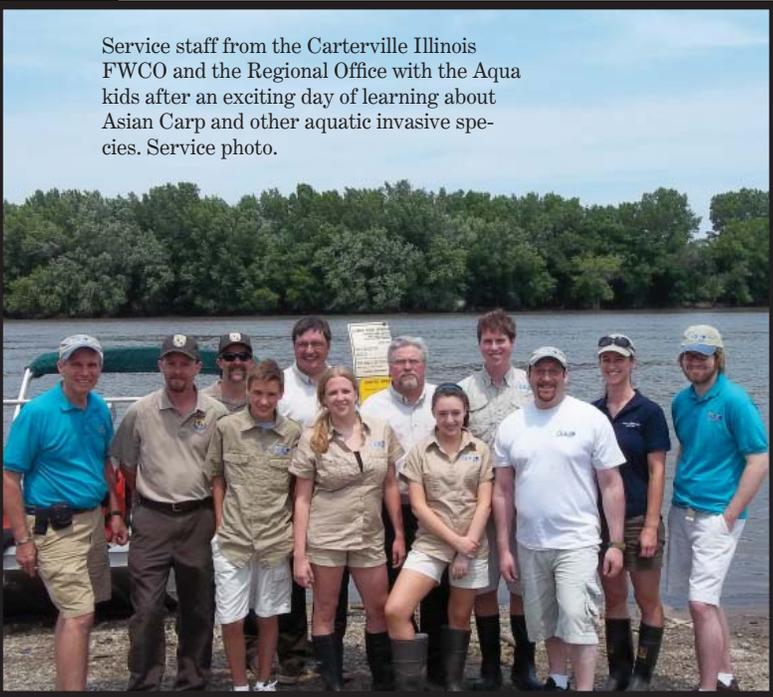
the display attracted over 400 visitors. Children made bookmarks featuring some of Minnesota's listed species, while adults found information about Smart Disposal, building bat boxes, and feeding birds. Suggested reading lists for adults and children were available, including a promo for the Service's online book club.

--Kim Mitchell
Endangered Species

Scott Yess returns spawned lake sturgeon to the Rainy River. Photo by Jerald Roberts (White Earth Natural Resources Department).



Around the Region



Service staff from the Carterville Illinois FWCO and the Regional Office with the Aqua kids after an exciting day of learning about Asian Carp and other aquatic invasive species. Service photo.

Above: Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge Manager Charlie Blair welcomes Chief Arvol Looking Horse to the refuge and presents him with several gifts. Service photo by Chuck Traxler.

A Job Well Done

Michael Vanderford of Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration retires on July 2. Pictured right, he monitored Asian carp migration in June 2009 on the Illinois River, downstream of Joliet.



Dragonflies and Damselies

It was a perfect blending of events that made for a spectacular day on the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The Annual Minnesota Dragonfly Gathering, along with the Great Lakes Odonata Meeting and National Trails Day Event offered more than 30 people, including this young girl (l), a great day on the river exploring. The group meandered through the marshes collecting dragonflies and damselflies and their larvae. Refuge Ranger Ed Lagace explained, "We collected the larvae and watched them emerge from this stage. It was just amazing."
--Cindy Samples, Upper Mississippi River NWR





U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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

Rick Frietsche retired on June 2. Frietsche has a long history in the Midwest Region, including positions as Assistant Manager at Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Project Leader at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and Crab Orchard NWR, and Engineering Program Manager in the Regional Office. Frietsche most recently served as assistant manager of the 240,000-acre Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Winona, Minn. and provided staff support for 11 other refuges in the Upper Mississippi River System. The Region wishes him well!

“Big rivers have always been a part of my life. I grew up hunting and fishing along the Arkansas River in western Arkansas and have spent most of my career working on large rivers and reservoirs.”

--Rick Frietsche

Thank you for entering your journal reports and photographs in the Fish and Wildlife Journal (and ARS)

<http://ars.fws.gov>.