



U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

May 2010

The ES Crowned Affair

STARRING...



Kirtland's Warbler



Piping Plover



Indiana Bat



Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

**Special Edition:
May 21
Endangered Species Day**



And ...The Whooping Crane



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:

Piping plover by USFWS; Joel Trick.
Kirtland's warbler by USFWS; Joel Trick.
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid by National Park Service.

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Endangered Species Day

Five years ago, the U.S. Senate designated the third Friday in May as Endangered Species Day. This year, Endangered Species Day is May 21, an opportunity to raise awareness about imperiled plants, animals, and habitats, and to demonstrate ways that others can help conserve these resources. To acknowledge this proclamation and the people who work on behalf of endangered species, I am encouraging each of you to engage in celebration of Endangered Species Day.

I asked Ecological Services Assistant Regional Director Lynn Lewis for ways that

employees could encourage partners, the public, and the media to get involved in Endangered Species Day. Lynn points out that we can focus on a federally endangered species, a state-listed endangered species, or perhaps a species of particular interest in your local area. Lynn also reminds us that Endangered Species Day recognizes disappearing habitats and landscapes.



Above: L to R: Chicago EFSO's Cyndi Duda joins Regional Director Tom Melius and Minnesota Valley's Mara Koenig for some small talk before the Jr. Duck Stamp show. USFWS Photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.



Above: L to R: Jerome Ford, Deputy Assistant Director for Migratory Birds, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enjoying the Jr. Duck Stamp festivities with Midwest Region Director Tom Melius. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.



Above: Pallid sturgeon caught with Columbia FWCO fishing gear. US-FWS Photo.

you've done work related to imperiled species or habitats to let people see exactly what you're doing on the ground.

- Encourage your state, county and city to pass a resolution or proclamation supporting Endangered Species Day.
- Use Endangered Species Day as an opportunity to host an open house or field

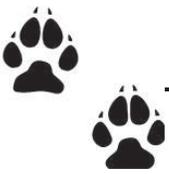
day for the public and media to showcase your accomplishments. Partner with other Service offices or field stations in your area.

Every program in the Service supports endangered species recovery, so take advantage of the opportunity to tell our story. And while you're out there, don't forget to document your activities for our website through pictures and video. Take some time to celebrate Endangered Species Day on May 21.

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

Here are some ideas:

- Sponsor a kids' coloring contest or essay contest.
- Write an article for a local newspaper about the work you do that directly or indirectly supports recovery of rare species or habitats in your area.
- Conduct a field trip to a place where



Law and Order: Enforcement's Key Role in Great Lakes Wolf Recovery

When it comes to gray wolves in the western Great Lakes states of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, there is little disagreement that the recovery work of federal, state, tribal and NGO partners has been successful. In this part of the country, wolf numbers have climbed, surpassing recovery goals and triggering multiple efforts to turn wolf management back to states and tribes. In particular, wolves have come back strongly in Wisconsin and Michigan, states where they were once extirpated. Today, each of these states supports a population in the neighborhood of 600, a conservation achievement in which many residents take great pride.

But along with success comes the challenge of protecting this fledgling wolf population. So successful has recovery work been that Service special agents are devoting more and more time to investigating illegal wolf kills in the two states, where wolves remain listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. As wolf

numbers increase, so too does the practice of shoot, shovel and shut up among those who see wolves as a threat.

Steve Stoinski, the Service's Special Agent in Green Bay, Wisconsin, says that most people are law-abiding. Some might hate wolves, he says, but they won't kill them illegally. The existence of law --state, federal, tribal -- is reason enough for most to avoid killing wolves. But many of those who have a low or zero tolerance for wolves are concerned about livestock, the health of the state's deer population, or the safety of their hunting dogs.

Some in the sporting community are targeting wolves with the idea that killing wolves protects their sport. Any perceived dip in the deer population is blamed on wolves. "We have around a million deer in Wisconsin," Stoinski says, "We have 600 wolves, but some deer hunters believe that's enough to threaten the deer population. And many hunters believe there are more than 600 wolves."

"There is zero tolerance for wolves in many areas," agrees Special Agent Chris Aldrich, who works out of Marquette, Michigan. "Some deer hunters are extremely resistant to wolf conservation because they see wolves as a threat to deer populations." A small number of people

actually take the law into their own hands and intentionally kill wolves illegally. Aldrich says between November and April, 14 wolves have been found dead in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and probably many more have gone unreported. He fears numbers may go up next fall when coyote hunting during deer rifle season will be permitted for the first time in Michigan. Wolves are sometimes shot by hunters who claim they mistook the animals for coyotes. Snaring coyotes is now legal in Michigan, and improperly set snares can (and have) killed wolves.

Stoinski says some resort to setting out poison bait to kill wolves, but the practice often kills other animals instead, including songbirds, eagles, and other wild game species.

As with most Law Enforcement issues, investigating wolf kills presents unique challenges. Policing vast areas -- there are thousands of square miles in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, for example -- means chances are not good that illegally killed wolves will be found. Even when a kill is discovered, agents must investigate quickly; other hunters still afield may have heard or seen something. However, anti-wolf sentiment keeps people from coming forward.

While rewards have been offered in Michigan and Wisconsin for information on illegal wolf kills, they have so far been ineffective. Illegal wolf kills are applauded in some communities, and it's not unknown for hunters to be offered





Law and Order: Enforcement's Key Role in Great Lakes Wolf Recovery

under-the-table pay for killing a wolf during coyote hunting tournaments. Fund-raisers are sometimes held to raise money for shooters who incur fines for killing wolves.

“To some, it’s worth the fine to kill a wolf,” says Aldrich. Perhaps most frustrating to both Stoinski and Aldrich is that such actions actually stall recovery progress and make turnover of wolf management to states and tribes more difficult. “When someone kills a wolf and throws the radio collar into a lake, they have no idea how much it hurts the program and reflects on the entire hunting community,” Stoinski says. “We lose track of the entire pack, and that sets us back when it comes to trying to delist.”

“From an LE standpoint,” says Aldrich, “the goal is to be able to hand wolf management back to the state. Illegal killing is affecting the ability of the Service to do this. It is actually counter to what illegal killers want in the long run.” Both agents say the hardest part of law enforcement when it comes to wolves is changing people’s minds about the animals. Stoinski says he sees wolves as a success

story for all conservationists, including hunters. “We need to emphasize the idea that it is in the best interest of everyone: hunters, ranchers, and the general public, to get wolves the off list. And one of the best ways is to support recovery, avoid poaching, and report wolf kills.” He says the irony of killing wolves is that it doesn’t much affect the wolf population, but it does set back efforts to remove the wolf from the endangered species list.

“I wish I could talk to every person in (Michigan’s) Upper Peninsula and tell them it is our goal to get these animals back under state management,” Aldrich says. “We’re not the bad guys. Those who are illegally hunting are the ones making it difficult to justify delisting.”

Accurate information is one important tool that both agents use as they interact with the public on wolves. Aldrich cites a Michigan study that monitored deer in Menominee County and found fawn kills by coyote, black bear and bobcats, but not wolves. Stoinski looks for opportunities to encourage the public to take a wise, rational approach to wolves. State partners are another

valuable asset. Both agents rely on their state counterparts, both in law enforcement and management to carry the message to the public about wolves. Each works closely with state conservation officers and with state wolf biologists. Both Aldrich and Stoinski agree that wolves won’t make it unless people support recovery. That support comes when

people feel they have options. Provisions that reimburse owners of livestock or hunting dogs lost to wolf predation help. Congress recently passed legislation providing states with funds to implement non-lethal control programs and compensate livestock owners for wolf losses. Lethal take of problem wolves is not currently permitted in either Michigan or Wisconsin.

During the recent period when wolves were not federally-listed, the States had the authority to respond to depredation incidents and remove the wolves responsible for such depredations. During the same period, Wisconsin also issued lethal control permits to private landowners who had experienced confirmed wolf depredations, allowing them to shoot wolves if they returned to their property.

During the time when such permits were available, very few wolves were killed by private landowners, but attitude toward wolf recovery was more positive. With wolves back on the list and no permits available, support for wolf recovery appears to be eroding. In the end, it will be up to the residents of Michigan and Wisconsin – and those in Minnesota where the wolf remains threatened – to determine the course of wolf recovery in the Great Lakes.

“I hope history will recognize what we’ve done,” says Stoinski. “This is one of the few places left in our country that can sustain wolves, and it’s something we should be proud of.”

-- Georgia Parham
External Affairs

Below: Gray wolves. USFWS photo.





Pallid Sturgeon History Remembered

There have been a lot of “firsts” for pallid sturgeon recovery efforts. Most recently was the first time a mass stocking occurred of locally obtained broodstock for the lower Missouri River. To understand where you are, you have to look at where you have been. In 1992, Missouri’s Department of Conservation Blind Pony Fish Hatchery led by Gary Heidrich, with the collaboration of MDC Fish Biologist Kim Graham, worked to spawn four pallid sturgeon obtained from commercial fishermen in the lower Mississippi River. This effort resulted in the first stocking of pallid sturgeon, 2,300 to be exact, in the Missouri River.

This occurred two years after the pallid sturgeon was listed as endangered and marked the beginning of a process none could have anticipated. Again in 1997, Blind Pony spawned pallids obtained from Mississippi River broodfish and they were again stocked into the lower Missouri River. The upper Missouri River then pulled off successful spawns and those genetics began to be reintroduced in the upper portions of the Missouri above the major dams. In 2001, over 10,000 pallids from the upper basin were stocked into the lower river after over 15,000 yearling pallids were lost at Blind Pony Fish Hatchery due to a Herpes virus outbreak, effectively ending their pallid production program for the next eight years. Since the fish was still considered to be in danger of extinction (supported by biologist’s only detecting a handful of wild fish each year) there would be in

excess of 50,000 pallid sturgeon stocked into the lower Missouri River from upper basin origin over the next three years. At this point, genetic concerns caught up to the stocking program. New detection techniques had become available combined with enough genetic data collections for pallid sturgeon from Montana to Louisiana.

Precautionary measures were put in place during 2007 that would only allow stocking of “local” origin broodstock within four statistically defined population groups. At that time there were five state and federal agencies sampling for broodstock in the lower Missouri River and none had ever captured a gravid female.

This situation was complicated by two ongoing telemetry programs in the lower Missouri and middle Mississippi Rivers that also needed gravid females to determine spawning locations and behavior. With increased efforts based on the need for local genetic material, biologist began to find adults in the upper portion of the lower Missouri River designated as the Central Lowlands Management Unit. These fish have subsequently been spawned and stocked in that unit. However, it wasn’t until 2009 that females and males were obtained in the lower portion of the lower Missouri River; the Interior Highlands Management Unit. These captures, made by Columbia USFWS and MDC, make it possible for an historic stocking of 1,100 Interior Highlands Management Unit pallid sturgeon from and into the lower Missouri River from the Interior Highlands Management Unit population. Coincidentally (or not),



Above: Wyatt Doyle, Branch Chief Columbia FWCO, releases pallid sturgeon into the Missouri River. USFWS photo.

this event has been made possible in 2010 because of the foresight and initiative of biologists back in 1992. Their initial stockings of pallid sturgeon are now producing mature fish that are able to be used in the telemetry programs.

The abundance of mature 1992 stocked fish allows them to be used for the telemetry study, leaving any wild pallids to be utilized for the production of future pallid sturgeon.

Interestingly, the “spoils of war” in this case have been that the nation’s oldest fish hatchery, Neosho National Fish Hatchery managed by the USFWS’ David Hendrix, has been revitalized and become a hub for pallid production and is the source of this year’s stocking. Blind Pony has been revamped and expanded and serves as the spawning facility for lower Missouri River fish once again. Also, state agencies and management offices have been employed to monitor other at-risk species, to ensure more don’t decline to the point of no return. More importantly, citizens around the river have become a part of the process as well. Often volunteering in mass to contribute

Patrolling to Protect the Pallid Sturgeon

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia dominated the commercial fishing industry in the Caspian and Black Seas. After 1989, the fishing industry became privatized, allowing for an open and unregulated commerce which nearly wiped out wild sturgeon populations in just a few years.

The supply of sturgeon, paddlefish and salmon caviar diminished, but demand for their valuable roe soared. Commercial fishermen began to look to North American waters to cater to the demands of the world's caviar consumers - grim news for the already struggling populations of pallid sturgeon in the Mississippi, Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers.

The pallid sturgeon, cousin to the more common shovelnose sturgeon, is a remnant of the Cretaceous period and one of the largest fish found in North America's large river systems.

Pallid sturgeon can grow to more than six feet in length and

weigh up to 80 pounds. When the pallid sturgeon was listed as federally endangered in 1990, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO)

amplified efforts to monitor and restore the species to its native habitat. Just as the fish and wildlife conservation office developed strategic monitoring and recovery efforts, special agents from the Service's Law Enforcement division ramped up efforts to patrol and prosecute illegal harvest of pallid sturgeon by commercial fishermen.

In a cooperative effort to restore pallid sturgeon populations in their native waters, fish biologists and federal law enforcement agents joined forces to reduce the threat posed by commercial fishermen to this endangered species.

Shovelnose and pallid sturgeon are often misidentified



Above: Service men make impressive catches. USFWS photo.

due to their similarity of appearance; therefore

commercial fishermen fishing for shovelnose can and do inadvertently capture endangered pallid sturgeon – a class A misdemeanor under the Endangered Species Act. If the flesh or roe are sold and the value exceeds \$350, the case could be prosecuted under the Lacey Act as a felony.

“It is very difficult to distinguish the two species, even for a biologist that works with and handles these fish on a regular basis,” said Dr. Tracy Hill, project leader at Columbia FWCO in central Missouri. “As you move down the system from north to south, especially in the lower Missouri all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, it becomes harder and harder to distinguish these fish from one another.”

State law enforcement officers

Below: Patrolling for Pallid. USFWS photo.



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Patrolling to Protect the Pallid Sturgeon

and special agents from multiple Service offices, along with biologists from Columbia FWCO and state natural resources agencies, began working together to improve monitoring and regulations-enforcement of commercial fishing. “I saw how important it was to protect this species,” said Dr. Hill. “And it was clear to us there was illegal activity taking place that was hampering our recovery efforts.”

The federal agents sought a solid training in fish identification to be able to distinguish pallid from shovelnose sturgeon, and fish biologists hoped to glean a sharper eye for illegal commercial fishing activities on the river. Fish biologists from Columbia FWCO shared their expertise on fish identification with special agents. By setting nets that imitated different types of commercial fishing gear, the special agents were better able to identify the various commercial harvest nets, and which were used for catching sturgeon. Special agents participated in on-the-water details alongside Columbia FWCO fish biologists to learn how to use side-scan sonar to look for commercial fishing nets. “We cover a large geographic area on our commercial fishing patrols, and it was difficult to know where and when the fishermen would be. There were so many variables making it difficult to monitor for suspicious activity,” said Dan Burlison, special agent with the Service’s St. Peters Law Enforcement Office. “Fisheries biologists are out on the river every day, so they can give us the insight we need to enforce

commercial fishing regulations. The fish biologists use the same gear that commercial fishermen use, but for different reasons. They have an understanding of the kinds of nets and times of year commercial fishermen go out,” Burlison said. “They were also able to help with the basics – giving us tips and tricks on how to distinguish a pallid from a shovelnose or hybrid.”

Special agents and biologists together patrolled portions of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, locating nets and practicing fish identification. “As we would pull the net, we would check to see if it was in violation of any state rules or regulations. We would check to see if the nets were properly tagged, and what type of fish they were set for – paddlefish, sturgeon, catfish, etc.,” said Burlison. “If we encountered a violation, such as a pallid sturgeon caught in the net, we would set up surveillance and wait for the commercial fisherman to return.”

In the circumstance that a pallid sturgeon is caught in a commercial fishing net, if released the commercial fishermen would not be under any scrutiny. However, if the pallid sturgeon is kept, the commercial fishermen would face prosecution.

Since the late 1990s, six cases of pallid sturgeon being caught by commercial fishermen have been documented. Several of the cases were prosecuted in state or federal court, one federal case is pending. The cases were prosecuted under state wildlife laws, the Lacey Act, or the endangered species. In 2005, Missouri Conservation Agents

found three pallid sturgeon in a commercial net, two were released alive and one had died. This case was prosecuted in federal court. “Some fishermen can’t tell male from female, so they will insert a turkey-baster type of needle into the abdomen to check for eggs,” said Burlison. “Others make a larger incision in the stomach.” The incision leaves behind what fish biologists term “check marks” on the abdomen of the fish. Law enforcement officers and fish biologists monitoring sturgeon use these check marks to provide information on locations of commercial harvesters depending on where the fish is found. “It’s hard to tell how many fish die from this methodology,” said Dr. Hill. “There’s always the possibility of infection.”

“Through these efforts that cross program lines, helping each other becomes one of the foremost things we should do,” said Dr. Hill. “We thrive in a teamwork environment, not only within our own fisheries office, but also across programs, within the larger Service family.” The lucrative caviar market coupled with the suspected take of federally endangered pallid sturgeon by commercial fishing will continue to present a challenge to the pallid sturgeon’s recovery. The Service is proposing to treat the shovelnose sturgeon as a threatened species under the “Similarity of Appearances” provisions of the Endangered Species Act to provide further protection for pallid sturgeon. Should the proposed rule be

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Ohio Private Lands Biologists Kraig McPeck Wins National Recovery Champion Award

Kraig McPeck, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service's) project leader for the Ohio Private Lands Office, is one of 18 winners of a national award recognizing achievements in endangered species recovery. Kraig was recognized for his hugely successful efforts to recover the endangered Topeka shiner, a small fish, in Iowa's Raccoon River watershed.

Service Acting Director Rowan Gould presented Kraig with the 2009 Recovery Champion Award for the Midwest at the North American Wildlife Conference in Milwaukee. Other Midwest winners were the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin; and two Ohio conservationists working with the threatened Lake Erie watersnake.

The Recovery Champion award recognizes Service employees and their partners for contributions to the recovery of threatened and endangered species in the United States.



Above: Kraig McPeck, (second from left) receives the 2009 Recovery Champion Award from Acting Director Rowan Gould, Regional Director Tom Melius (right) and Assistant Director for Endangered Species Gary Fraser (left). USFWS photo.

“The Recovery Champion award both recognizes the exceptional conservation accomplishments of its honorees and highlights the importance of strong and diverse partnerships in species conservation,” said Gould. “Recovery Champions are helping imperiled species regain their place in the natural resources fabric of our country while focusing attention on the importance of conserving our nation’s biological heritage for future generations.”

From 2005 to 2009, Kraig was instrumental in facilitating restoration of almost 40 off-channel oxbows habitats for the shiner. Kraig’s design for restored habitats had almost immediate results: follow-up surveys showed young Topeka shiners where none had previously occurred. Just as important were Kraig’s strong efforts to recruit large numbers of landowners who participated in shiner restoration efforts in Iowa’s

North Raccoon River watershed.

“Kraig always goes the extra mile for the resource and for the landowners who made this habitat restoration effort so successful,” Midwest Regional Director Tom Melius said. “Kraig and his work are making huge contributions toward

improving the Topeka shiner’s status and habitat in Iowa.”

Kraig grew up working and playing on a small dairy farm in northwest Illinois. A graduate of Augustana College and Western Illinois University, he holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in biology and environmental sciences. Kraig spent five years working for the Army Corps of Engineers on big river ecosystem restoration projects on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, focusing on habitat modeling and benefits.

In 2003 Kraig was hired by the Service to conduct federal project reviews and endangered species consultations. For the past 5 years, he has worked as a Private Lands Biologist and provided technical and financial support for stream, wetland and upland habitat restorations on privately owned properties throughout Illinois and Iowa. Kraig is currently the state coordinator in Ohio for the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

--Georgia Parham
External Affairs



Above: Topeka shiner in hand. USFWS photo.

The Niangua Darter

What's Good For the Fish Can Be Good For the Farm



Niangua darters and cattle don't mix. How could they? Darters need clear, shallow pools in streams with gravel or rocky bottoms. They can't tolerate silty water. Cattle often depend on such streams for water, wading in, churning up silt, making living conditions for sensitive species like the darter impossible.

Darters and cattle don't mix, but in Missouri, they do live side by side. The majority of the land within the federally threatened Niangua darter's range is privately owned, and that means that cooperation from landowners is essential to the recovery of this species. For the past decade, the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Missouri has been working with private landowners and other partners, such as the Missouri Department of Conservation, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Services Agency to restore habitat critical to the survival of the Niangua darter.

"Because the darter occurs mostly in stream habitats in private ownership, we couldn't be successful with recovery efforts without the willing and voluntary participation of our landowners," says the Missouri State Private Lands Coordinator Kelly Srigley Werner. "They are our biggest asset in this partnership."

Over the past 10 years, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in Missouri has worked with 22 landowners on 28 projects within the darter's range, either directly on streams

known to support Niangua darter populations, or in upstream tributaries that flow into those streams. In 2009, \$80,000 was awarded to the Missouri Private Lands Office to help landowners through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act in Tavern Creek. Three of those projects are ready for construction and two are being developed.

It is the partnerships that make this effort a success. By pooling resources, funds go farther for everyone. Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Wild Turkey Federation, the Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Services Agency all have a stake in helping landowners in this region. The efforts benefit the darter, but the effects go far beyond this little fish. Such work improves riparian habitats to benefit migratory and game birds, and healthy streams that support other aquatic life and the people who live in the region.

Projects are aimed at improving water quality for the darter by practices such as fencing riparian areas to exclude cattle, stabilizing stream banks, and planting trees in riparian corridors. The practices that have been put into place help to improve water quality and Niangua darter habitat by decreasing the amount of sediment entering these waters, and increasing the ability of riparian vegetation to trap sediment and filter out excess nutrients from run-off before it enters the stream.



Above: 1. Construction of a rock hard point on the Maries River helps stabilize the bank, reduces erosion and improves water quality. Photo by Kelly Srigley Werner. 2. These gray-headed coneflowers are typical of the grasses produced after seeding to improve pastures. They benefit streams and serve as important habitat for grassland-dependent songbirds and pollinators. Photo by Kelly Srigley Werner. 3. A reinforced stream crossing like this one helps Niangua darters by reducing erosion and sediment caused by vehicles traveling through the stream. Photo by Kelly Srigley Werner.

One big challenge where Niangua darter occurs on private lands

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The Niangua Darter

What's Good For the Fish Can Be Good For the Farm



is helping landowners with their cattle operations when their only watering source is streams. Also, agricultural producers often need to use vehicles to cross streams to get from one field to another and to move cattle from one grazing field to the other. The Service and their partners help landowners alleviate these challenges by providing alternative watering sources and reinforced stream crossings to support heavy equipment. This reduces sedimentation, nutrification, and erosion by getting cattle out of streams and helping to stabilize substrates when landowners need to access fields across stream habitats. We are also providing funds for “green” practices that rely on solar power for pumps to move water around the farm. We share these ideas with other landowners through demonstration days and cook outs to help generate interest in these types of activities.

Another big problem in Niangua darter habitats is that substrates associated with the streams are composed of loose, gravelly sediments which slough off of banks easily when erosion begins. Some landowners have lost up to 50 feet of field width due to excessive erosion problems. While expensive, Missouri Private Lands works with Missouri Department of Conservation engineering experts to design rock hard points and toe rock configurations to move the energy of the stream away from the cut bank. This allows for natural revegetation of the streambank and also stabilizes in-stream substrates.

Native trees are planted along

riparian corridors where trees have historically been removed for row crops, grazing cattle or for hay. Native trees help restore the stream corridor, provide shade for regulating water temperatures and also provide cover and carbon to the aquatic system as a whole.

“Overall, we have helped landowners stabilize 4.5 miles of streambank and protect and restore 264.5 acres of riparian corridor to directly benefit the Niangua darter these efforts have additional downstream benefits especially where we can reconnect riparian corridor habitat,” Srigley Werner says. “It wasn’t easy to get started, but we are now a recognized partner at landowner appreciation dinners which is really a nice place to be.”

The private lands projects have helped landowners achieve productive cattle operations in ways they could not have imagined without the help of the Service and its partners. They also appreciate and desire high water quality. “Working hand in hand with these guys gives the Service credibility and allows us to “walk in each others’ shoes” for a while,” says Srigley Werner. “Landowners understand that we are trying to protect the fish, and we understand they are trying to make ends meet for their families in the best way they know how.”

The Missouri Private Lands Office, through the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners who voluntarily wish to implement habitat improvement projects for the benefit of Federal Trust Species, such as the Niangua darter. --*Georgia Parham and Kelly Srigley Werner*

Pallid Sturgeon History Continued

any way they can and to be part of the effort to do something bigger than ourselves.

We can’t underestimate the power of one person’s efforts to get the ball rolling in restoring a species. Gary Heidrich has moved on from Blind Pony and Kim Graham is deceased, but we follow in their footsteps of doing today what we know must be done for the future. During April 2010, over 80 volunteers and 50 biologists will be out searching over 1000 miles of river for the next generation of pallid sturgeon genetics. We will be searching for three of Gary and Kim’s black egg females needed in USGS’s river telemetry programs, which has become one of the largest in the world. Although one person can start the process, it takes an army of many to complete it. For those of us that have been around a while, we can say “remember when” and explain what the big deal is with yet another stocking, that nothing has come easy and it is with reflection and gratitude to those that laid the ground work before us that we will commit each year in this effort to recover this species and God willing it will be in my lifetime.

--Brian Elkington
Fish Biologist



Endangered Necedah

Habitat is the area in which the food, water, and shelter that an animal needs to survive can be found. In today's world, plant and animal species are in decline due to one or more aspects of this very requirement. Thankfully public lands play a vital role in providing habitat for troubled species.

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is a prime example of wildlife diversity and it is the perfect host for supporting many threatened and endangered species including the world's largest population of the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly. From wolves roaming its uplands, to cactus growing in its' sandy floor, the refuge is considered by some as an endangered Necedah for the wildlife found within.

Wandering down from the north woods of Minnesota, wolves made their way back to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in

Below: Red-headed woodpeckers are a common year-round sight at Necedah. USFWS photos.



Rich Armstrong Photographs 2006

January 1996. Gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) had been gone for more than sixty years. Within three years a pack established and one pack quickly turned into two. Being habitat generalists, the packs wander widely over the refuge during the winter but come denning time, their range contracts, often to savannas in remote corners of the property.

When the pups emerge from the den for the first time, they see a savanna in full bloom. Puccoons (*Lithospermum spp.*) provide a splash of yellow, while trailing-arbutus (*Epigaea repens*) provides pink, all against a sea of blue violets, lupines, and spiderworts. On the wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*) butterfly eggs can be found. Some of those eggs will hatch, feeding on that lupine, and eventually become adult Karner blue butterflies (*Lycaeides Melissa samuelis*). The adult butterflies' brief lives culminate with females laying eggs on or near wild lupine to complete the life cycle.

While Karner blue butterflies are completing the first of two annual life cycles, woolly milkweed (*Asclepias lanuginosa*) sets a cluster of understated white flowers.

What this diminutive plant lacks in charisma, it makes up for in diversity. This rare plant is at home in the heart of Wisconsin's



Above: Karner blue butterflies thrive in Necedah's savannas and grass pinks bloom in the wet meadows. USFWS photos.

Sand Counties and is an ecosystem itself. Herbivorous insects feed on woolly milkweed. Inside, some of those herbivores are immature forms of

a select group of parasitoid insects, eating their host from the inside out. Inside some of those parasitoids are immature forms of an even more select group of hyper-parasitoids, eating their host from the inside out.

While the trophic battle plays out on woolly milkweeds, overhead, red-headed woodpeckers (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) are pulling off their second clutch of the year. Declining everywhere else, the Midwest's best populations of this fiery woodpecker are found in the Necedah Refuge year round. Possibly more than any other, this species benefits from fire. Fire doesn't create acorns but it provides easy access to this prized, high energy food, loved by red-headed woodpeckers. Red-headed woodpeckers hoard acorns, caching

Continued on next page.



them in every nook and cranny they can find. Competing with red-headed woodpeckers for acorns are whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) that wander into the savannas immediately following fire. After feasting on acorns, the whooping cranes head back to meadows where they are most at home. The meadows are full of blooming grass pinks (*Calopogon tuberosus*) at this time. This little orchid has evolved an inverted or reticulated flower specifically designed for bees, blotting their back with pollen while they feed. As a bee leaves a grass pink to gather more nectar, it must dodge a mighty little predator, the ringed boghaunter dragonfly (*Williamsonia lintneri*). This little dragonfly is primarily an Atlantic Coastal species and its Wisconsin distribution is limited to just a handful of sedge meadows in four counties in the center of the state.

If the bee, with orchid pollen saddled on its back, avoids a dragonfly encounter, it will most likely cross the nesting territory of several nervous sedge wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) pairs. The wrens lurk behind heathery mounds of wild cranberries, ready to ambush unsuspecting insects. Weaving in and out of wren territories, the bee crosses the meadow and reaches a patch of Meadow Beauty (*Rexia virginica*). Like the ringed boghaunter, this plant is an Atlantic Coastal disjunct, living in isolation in the Sand Counties. Meadow Beauty's vibrant pink petals and glowing yellow anthers attract many pollinators but only one, the bee,

will do. Its pollen is locked in sack-like anthers, released only with high frequency vibrations of a buzzing bee; a process called sonication.

As Meadow Beauty's pollen is freed by high frequency vibrations, a smell of diesel exhaust permeates Necedah meadows. For as dependent as meadow flowers are on specific pollinators, the entire system is dependent on help from the Necedah staff. This help comes in the form of plugging one hundred and twenty miles of drainage ditches that criss-cross and degrade the meadows. The ditches were dug with steam-powered dredges early in the 20th Century. Aldo Leopold referred to this effort as the "drainage dream." Now, skilled operators use excavators, dozers, and tracked dump trucks to erase that dream.

Meadow restoration efforts continue until a third disjunct, cross milkwort (*Polygala cruciata*), is fruiting. An empty black tern (*Chlidonias niger*) nest floats on the meadow, the adults and young of the year assembled in great flocks are already heading south. A Blanding's turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) will spend the winter hibernating below that nest but for the time-being it is enjoying the last few days of warmth in a nearby savanna, delicately sampling the flesh of brittle prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia fragilis*). This little cactus evolved with large grazers, its' spines a constant reminder to elk and bison. Necedah's savannas still long for these charismatic vertebrates. In their absence, maintenance staff mimic grazing with bat-wing and fecon mowers. But all anticipate

a day when cactus spines realize their fullest potential.

Around cacti already shutting down for the winter, sand coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata* var. *lanceolata*) hardens its' seed. That seed, meant to release slowly to disburse across a snowy landscape may not have that chance. Grabbed up by refuge volunteers, this seed will be spread to the refuge's newest restored savanna. As the seed is being collected, timber on the savanna is being removed for pulp and bio-fuel. And on a warm day next spring, the savanna's seedbed will be prepped by a prescribed burn team, whose legacy reaches back many decades to a time when Leopold himself walked the property and marveled at every "cog in the wheel."

So as the bee buzzes around the refuge finding nectar and dispersing pollen, we at Necedah try to manage for the species that were once found throughout the Wisconsin Sand Counties. As humans we are responsible for the health of our planet and all that live here, especially the species with the dwindling numbers. And as Leopold's predecessor John Muir, former Sand County resident once said, "When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

Note: With the exception of puceon, trailing arbutus, lupine, grass pinks, and "the bee", all species listed in this article are federally and/or state listed or species of management concern.

--Richard King and Daniel Peterson



Native American Liaison Update

What are our tribal trust responsibilities as a federal agency and what does that mean for the work that we do? With 36 federally recognized tribes and over 3.8 million acres of tribal lands in our region, we have tremendous opportunities to partner with tribes to achieve common goals, as well as certain responsibilities to assist tribes in achieving their fish and wildlife conservation goals.

Over the next few months, I will be interviewing several experts on the issue of tribal trust as part of a training video we are developing to help us all better understand what our tribal trust responsibilities are and what it means for the work that we do. Stay tuned for more on this. We will be hosting a viewing of the video and a discussion on working with tribes via webex toward the end of the fiscal year.

This is busy time for all and I

wanted to let you know about several events coming up this spring and summer. Youth Fish Day, a collaborative effort with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge, several schools and other partner organizations, is set for Friday, May 14 at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Bass Ponds. Youth Fish Day is a great opportunity for kids to get outside and fish. Volunteers are still needed for this fun event. If you are in the Twin Cities area and you are able to help out, please contact Beth Ullenberg at 952-858-0712.

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society is having their annual national meeting in Cloquet, Minn, June 6–9. The meeting will be hosted by the Fond du Lac Band of Chippewa Indians and will be a great opportunity to learn more about tribal fish and wildlife management priorities, to connect with tribal natural resource staff from our region and around the country, and to discuss key projects and initiatives that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is working on. The Service' Law Enforcement Program will be assisting at the meeting with training for tribal conservation officers. Paper submissions from all areas of natural resource management are welcome, with extra consideration given to submissions focusing on

climate change, invasive species, and emerging fish and wildlife health

concerns. More information about the meeting is available at: <http://www.nafws.org/>.

In late July or early August, the Service's fisheries and refuges programs are teaming up to support a motorboat and airboat safety "train-the-trainer" course for Midwest Region tribal natural resource staff. This capacity building training is being coordinated by Dave Wedan, our Regional Watercraft Safety Coordinator, and is targeted at experienced boaters who are interested in becoming instructors who can then provide safety training to other tribal natural resource staff. The course dates will be finalized soon. Please contact Dave Wedan with any questions at 608-783-8435.

Finally, I wanted to let you know that I continue to meet with tribes to learn more about their natural resource programs and projects funded through our tribal Wildlife Grant Program. Since January, I've met with the following tribes: the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians; the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; the Ho-Chunk Nation of Wisconsin; the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians; the Lower Sioux Indian Community; and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. These visits have been a tremendous learning and relationship building opportunity. I look forward to working with you to highlight our existing partnerships with tribes and explore new partnership opportunities. Please give me a ring or send me an e-mail anytime!

--Tim Patronski, External Affairs



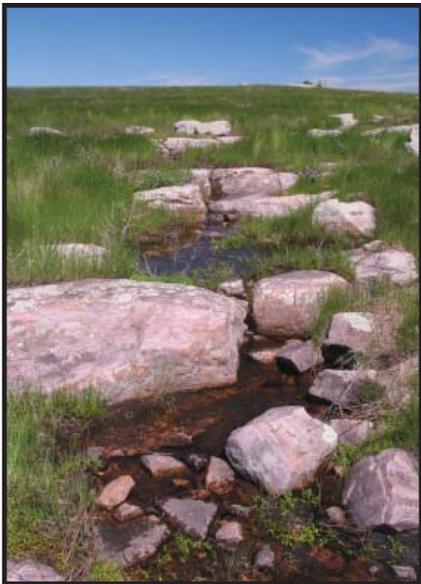
Above: Matt Symbal, Administrator of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians' Tribal Treaty Rights and Natural Resources Division shows off the tribe's new fisheries assessment vessel during a recent visit. The vessel was funded in part through the Service's Tribal Landowner Incentive Program. USFWS photo.

Conserving an Endangered Ecosystem

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge



Northern tallgrass prairie, once one of the Midwest's largest and most biologically productive ecosystems, has been reduced to less than one-tenth of one percent of its original expanse and has become almost functionally extinct



Above: Often, prairie remnants that survive today were too rocky to plow. USFWS Photo.

due to fire control and extirpation of keystone species. Estimates place the original northern tallgrass prairie in Minnesota and Iowa at approximately 25 million acres. Less than 300,000 acres remain, most of it scattered in small parcels that often have little or no wildlife value.

Grassland nesting birds, such as dickcissels, bobolinks, and upland plovers, are some of the most imperiled species found in northern tallgrass prairies. They have shown more dramatic, consistent, and widespread

declines than any other group of birds in North America. Not surprisingly, their declines mirror declines in quantity and quality of our native grasslands.

Besides simply having few areas available for nesting, predation and competition further reduce the chance for grassland nesting birds to survive and have young. Large predators (wolves, cougar, and bear) have been replaced by smaller predators (fox, skunk, and raccoon) that prey extensively on birds, their eggs, and their young. Grassland birds that nest in prairie fragments are forced to concentrate their nests in small scattered parcels of habitat characterized by large amounts of linear edge (i.e., the area where prairie meets farmland, lawns, or other types of habitats). The problem with edge, from a bird's perspective, is that it provides corridors along which red fox, striped skunk, and raccoon hunt, making it easy for them to find ground nests near edges. The more edge and less interior grasslands, the more nests lost to predators.

Further, fire control and woody plantings have allowed forest-edge birds to expand from the Midwest oak and Eastern deciduous forests, westward into prairies areas, adding to competition for the small amount of remaining habitat.

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge was established in 2000 to address the loss of these American grasslands and the declining species that depend on them. Refuge management focuses on connecting scattered remnant prairies in western Minnesota and Iowa and restoring ecosystem functionality.

My grandfather told my dad to never plow up that piece of prairie across the river from the home place. Well, dad passed that on to me. My husband asked about plowing it up the other day, but I said no. Grandpa said to leave it alone. He said we always need a reminder of what this country looked like when it was first settled. Protecting this prairie with a permanent easement will give me the peace of mind I need, knowing that we kept our promise to grandpa."

--Clay County, Iowa resident

The refuge provides a mechanism for groups with similar goals to work together to conserve and restore northern tallgrass prairie.

Lands proposed for inclusion in the refuge contain native grasslands that, in many cases, are the only remaining cover available to wildlife in a predominantly agricultural landscape. Incredibly, these remnant tracts support more than 300 plant species and 1,500 insect species. Wildlife associated with these small, scattered tracts include upland sandpiper, marbled godwit, sandhill crane, and prairie chicken. Approximately 243 species of birds are known to regularly use the northern tallgrass prairie area at some time of the year, with 152 species breeding here.

Continued on next page.

Conserving an Endangered Ecosystem

Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge



The Northern Tallgrass Prairie Habitat Preservation Area, as outlined in the 1998 Environmental Impact Statement, includes all or portions of 85 counties in western Minnesota and northwestern Iowa. The 25-year goal for the refuge is to protect 77,000 acres, approximately half in conservation easements and half through fee title ownership. The refuge presently consists of 45 tracts of land totaling 4,445 acres. Thirty-six tracts are protected through conservation easements for a total of 1,938 acres. The nine fee title tracts total 2,506 acres and include two tracts in Iowa (352 acres) and eight tracts in Minnesota (2,156 acres).

Although limited to small, scattered tracts of remnant prairie, the Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge supports a surprising diversity of life. Four plant species and seven wildlife species found in the refuge are federally endangered or threatened, including two of the world's largest populations of the threatened prairie bush clover; as well as the federally threatened western prairie fringed orchid and piping plover. The refuge contains indispensable habitat for waterfowl such as mallards, pintail, canvasback and blue-winged teal. Several globally rare species can be found here, including some of the last remaining populations of

threatened by lack of fire, intensive-grazing systems, gravel mining, conversion to agricultural row crops, and invasive non-native species. Protection through acquisition or easement prevents conversion and allows management in the form of prescribed fire, rotational grazing where appropriate, and restoration of old cropland using local ecotype grass and forb seed.

The long-term objectives of the project include reconstruction of tallgrass prairie using native plant species to buffer or connect remnant native prairie tracts. Prairie tracts are also severely threatened by fragmentation. During poor economies, financially-stressed farmers often consider dividing and selling portions of their land. Easements can provide financial assistance to help them keep their property and prevent further subdivision. Prairies are a well-documented store of terrestrial carbon. Preventing conversion with grassland easements ensures this carbon will be maintained.

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge, by preserving and restoring remnant prairie, is preventing the extinction of an ecosystem and helping to conserve and recover many rare and declining species.

--Kim Mitchell and Alice Hanley



Above: Small wetlands are found throughout the refuge's scattered tracts of prairie. USFWS Photo.

the rare Dakota skipper, powesheik skipperling, and regal fritillary butterflies.

Remaining tallgrass prairie in Minnesota and Iowa is continually

Former CNN Environmental Reporter Feanny's E-beat: A Voice for the Voiceless

Upon hearing her accented speech, the mind conjures images of a life back-dropped with rolling green hills, sunny fields, castles and tiaras. In an ocean of contrast, the role of environmental producer Camille Feanny was cast instead as a compassionate public servant in the busy newsroom that was Cable News Network's (CNN's) science and technology unit, where she made her mark as a producer of both *Next@CNN*, an environment and science news magazine series, and the Emmy nominated special series, *Earth Matters*.

Feanny found her niche with on the ground, compelling

in producing shows and stories with a scientific focus.

Feanny became a journalist at CNN largely due to a combination of opportunities and requirements, one of which was to complete an internship with one of the two concurrent master's degrees that she was pursuing at the University of Miami.

A world traveler covering environmental stories, Feanny began her studies in environmental engineering at Florida International University but changed her major when she became intrigued with environmental studies course content. Born in Jamaica, Feanny says the decision seemed to



Above: Former CNN environmental reporter Camille Feanny on an International Development and Humanitarian Assistance (IDHA) fellowship in Egypt. Photo courtesy of Camille Feanny.

Feanny's E-BEAT: Feanny visited the Great Lakes and produced a number of Midwest stories, including *Get the Lead Out*, a lead contamination story based in Herculaneum, Mo. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service weighed in on this story, as well, having measured elevated levels of lead in fish, mice, frogs, and birds tested near Herculaneum.

news reporting that focused on the impactful interaction between humans and the environment. Often casting a wider lens to capture stories that were overlooked, Feanny's perspective brought the background into focus and ultimately became a voice for the voiceless.

Her impressive 10-year career with CNN seems almost ironic, as it was all very serendipitous. "I didn't plan to become a journalist," Feanny reveals, "journalism actually found me. And I was happy that it did." Having a science foundation, she says, facilitated her effectiveness

reflect more of who she was. "As a young woman from a Caribbean Island, I became very intrigued with the environment. From a very young age, I spent a lot of time in the environment on farms and other natural settings. And certainly on the beach," says the now 42-year old. As an island girl, she was always interested in researching the lives of people in coastal communities, and the critical interactions between those populations and their environments. "I really became interested in what people were doing to preserve those areas," she says. Eugenia Harvey, Feanny's CNN colleague and one time producer for ABC news anchor Diane Sawyer, was eager

to talk about Feanny. "She's one of those people who makes you smarter every time you talk to her," Harvey said. She confirms Feanny's love of nature and the environment via an amusing story. Feanny's raving enthusiasm about the beauty of Dauphin Island off the coast of Alabama prompted Harvey one weekend to seek out what she thought, based on Feanny's glowing description, would be akin to some kind of Jamaican paradise. Upon her arrival, Harvey says laughing, she found herself in the middle of a bird sanctuary and opted for the nearest hotel which was 20 minutes away.

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Former CNN Environmental Reporter Feanny's E-beat: A Voice for the Voiceless

Another colleague of Feanny's, Diane Hawkins-Cox, a CNN Earth Matters producer who aggressively pursued a 2008 central Illinois Asian carp story funded by Anderson Cooper 360, says Feanny visited the Great Lakes and produced a number of Midwest stories, including *Get the Lead Out*, a lead contamination story based in Herculaneum, Mo. "We covered the growth of the town around the lead plant over the past 100 years," says Feanny, "and the long-term effects of the toxin on local residents who were economically dependent on the plant, yet environmentally and medically impacted by it." The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) weighed in on this story, as well, having measured elevated levels of lead in fish, mice, frogs, and birds tested near Herculaneum. Many of the birds tested in the area were found to suffer from lead poisoning.

Feanny continues to reveal what is for her a recurring theme, something that is deeply important to her—the impact of the environment on humans, particularly those who are most vulnerable. When the conversation turns the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, Feanny paints a succinct, yet lucid portrait, "...just seeing the difference in the capacity to respond, the capacity to evacuate, made me realize that poverty and lack of resources can turn a natural event that would have occurred anyway—and that occurred—for some, it was an occurrence, it was an event, and for others, it was a disaster," she

says. Feanny's point resonates loudly in the shadow of the recent Icelandic volcano eruption that left thousands stranded at airports around the world. For some—those with resources, the volcano eruption caused a mere detour before booking a cruise as an alternative method of travel. For the remaining others—that's exactly what they did—remain and wait, with their fate in the hands of others. They had no other recourse.

"Events happen every day. Natural events, medical events, lots of events happen on a regular basis. What turns an event in my mind into a disaster is the incapacity of people to respond effectively to those events. And I wanted to understand what limited people's capacity to respond to those events. And it is this view that I brought into a lot of my stories," Feanny says.

The impact of environmental devastation on people can be emotionally grueling. But Feanny says when overcome, her tears fall in private. "They don't need me to break down," she reflects aloud, "they need me to be effective."

Effectiveness can sometimes takes on a different dimension for African American environmental reporters. That appears to be true in Feanny's case, as well.

"I think perhaps being a person of color who has seen the many layers of the effects of marginalization and discrimination, maybe not directly, but certainly indirectly, I could identify with some of these issues. And understand them from a different perspective. And I think that certainly influenced how I did my stories."

An environmental reporter who is also African-American is not unheard of, but is atypical for sure. An atypical background in an



Feanny's E-BEAT

"...just seeing the difference in the capacity to respond, the capacity to evacuate, made me realize that poverty and lack of resources can turn a natural event that would have occurred anyway—and that occurred—for some, it was an occurrence, it was an event, and for others, it was a disaster."

"Good stories rise. This she says because reporters read local papers, blogs and news feeds, in addition to receiving calls from government agencies and academics that *they have built relationships with.*"

--Former CNN
Environmental Reporter,
Camille Feanny

atypical setting tends to inform an atypical perspective.

"And so that limited capacity to respond and limited ability for you to just deal with a situation that is thrown at you," she continues, "that you did not necessarily anticipate and even if you anticipated it, you couldn't do anything about it. I think I see that on a regular basis with minority communities. And being a minority, I am more aware of those issues...and

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Wind, Bats and Birds

Region-Wide HCP for Wind Energy Projects

Once an oddity, wind farms with their rows of tall, spare towers supporting slowly rotating blades, are becoming a common sight in the Midwest. Demand for renewable energy is fueling rapid growth of the industry. Wind generation capacity in the U.S. more than quadrupled between 2000 and 2006, doubling about every three years. The Upper Midwest is home to some of the most rapid growth. Of the top 10 states adding new wind capacity in 2009, three were Iowa, Missouri, and Minnesota. Missouri posted the fastest growth rate in wind development of any state during the second quarter of 2009 with wind power installations expanding in the state by 99 percent.

Wind as a renewable energy source benefits fish and wildlife resources, but not without a cost. Wind farm construction, along with new transmission lines and access roads, may destroy and degrade fish and wildlife habitat, especially if new farms are in undeveloped areas. Construction of these facilities near water may

degrade lakes and rivers. Most significantly, though, rotating turbines kill birds and bats.

To meet the demand for rapid approval of wind energy plants,

Within a wind plant that was being monitored during 2003, 475 dead bats were found between April and November. Studies have since reported that less than half the carcasses actually present are usually found during monitoring searches.

yet ensure conservation of listed species, the Service and a coalition of eight states, the Conservation Fund, and representatives of the wind energy industry are preparing a Multi-Species Habitat

Conservation Plan (MSHCP). This is an incidental take permitting program for 30 federally listed species that may be impacted by future wind energy projects in the Midwest Region.

Unexpectedly, researchers are finding that wind turbines kill large numbers of bats. Before 2001, birds were the focus of wind



Above: Typical 3-bladed turbines in commercial wind farms can rotate at speeds (measured at the tip of the blade) over 200 miles per hour. Photo by Petr Kratochvil.

turbine mortality studies and few dead bats were reported. Once researchers started finding dead bats, however, study designs were adjusted to better document bat mortality. Since then, numbers of dead bats found at wind facilities have grown.

Unfortunately, many sites suitable for wind power in the Upper Midwest are in the core maternity range of the endangered Indiana bat. Additionally, some of the windiest areas within the Upper Midwest encompass the ecologically sensitive Great Lakes shorelines. These shorelines provide critical nesting habitat for the federally-endangered piping plover and stop-over habitat for a number of migratory songbirds of concern, including the federally-endangered Kirtland's warbler.



Above: Siting wind turbines in farm fields minimizes habitat destruction but does not eliminate bird and bat mortality. USFWS photo.

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Wind, Bats and Birds Region-Wide HCP for Wind Energy Projects

At a time when rapid growth of renewable energy is necessary to address global warming, the Service has the unenviable position of raising these concerns by way of our Endangered Species Act responsibilities.

Since the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions seemingly overrides all other environmental concerns; politicians, industry advocates, and environmentalists have questioned our need to review and address impacts from wind energy development. We do have a legal mandate under the Endangered Species Act. But more importantly, wind power capacity can increase rapidly and we can conserve biodiversity, we do not need to choose between the two. Wind energy development is challenging, but impacts can be avoided and reduced through thoughtful siting, design, additional research, and mitigation. These are the goals of the MSHCP.

Planning for the MSHCP has been in the works for about a year and the coalition recently received a \$3.3 million HCP Planning Assistance grant to begin the real work. We need much more information to adequately conserve listed species. For bats, as an example, we need to understand why they fly around wind turbines and how they're being killed before we can adjust design and siting to avoid impacts. Some of the money from the HCP Planning Grant will fund studies to address these and other unknowns. The HCP grant provides an excellent opportunity to make progress in finding ways to safely develop

wind facilities near listed species habitats with minimal cost to the developer.

Often, there is no federal regulator for wind power projects, which has led to a patchwork of state and local regulations within the Midwest region. As a result, wind development proposals have met with protracted, unpredictable, and fragmented responses from the natural resource agencies. Besides frustrating and costing developers; slow, fragmented responses lead to missed opportunities for conserving fish and wildlife resources. The MSHCP is a means of uniting state and federal resource agencies so that we can provide unified, landscape-scale conservation recommendations.

For the wind industry, a multi-state approach ensures consistent application of species conservation measures (i.e., avoidance, minimization and mitigation measures) across the states and among Service offices. This, in turn, prevents unnecessary delays and provides an "even playing field" for developers. For the Service and developers, obtaining a permit will be easier and faster than preparing numerous, single, site-specific HCPs. Developers will know beforehand the conditions of the permit, which will provide them better tools for site selection and project design.

An eight-state HCP is a huge undertaking because of the number of players, the number of species included, and the size of the area. Initially it will be slower than a small HCP, but the result will benefit all parties, allowing

wind energy facilities to flourish while protecting, conserving, and recovering threatened and endangered species.

--Kim Mitchell, RO ES

Patrolling Pallid Continued

accepted, pallid sturgeon will be protected by treating shovelnose sturgeon as a threatened species where their ranges overlap, making commercial fishing of shovelnose sturgeon in those areas illegal.

For more information about the efforts of the Service's Midwest Region Law Enforcement program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/StPeters/>

For more information about the efforts of the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office visit <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/columbiafisheries/>.



Waves of parents, siblings and other immediate family members meandered through the doors last Thursday evening, flooding the entire first floor with laughter, stories and fond memories, at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, home to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge (NWR).

The highly anticipated dinner celebration, sponsored by the refuge, was a grand opportunity for Washburn fourth graders to share their passion and knowledge of the natural world while showcasing their art and poetry talents through a powerful refuge environmental education program called River of Words.

River of Words (ROW) is a multi-disciplinary model focusing on watershed awareness and education. The purpose of the project and curriculum is to cultivate place-based,

interdisciplinary, hands-on education by promoting local knowledge of watersheds, cultivating a sense of place, encouraging imagination and action in children, acknowledging their creativity and concerns, as well as helping them give back to their local communities through dissemination of their art and poetry. Kevin Lowry, visitor services manager, who is the lead instructor for the environmental education program, says "River of Words provides meaningful, enjoyable experiences in the outdoors for people of all ages that bond them with nature, fosters a conservation ethic and assists the Service in accomplishing its mission while conserving the nature of America."

The concrete partnership between Washburn Elementary School and the refuge is entering its fifth year and has proven to be a nourishing tool for connecting children to our natural world.

"We see our work resulting in all individuals and communities gaining a greater connection with nature, sense of place, respect for their environment, and a lifelong interest in and participation

in the conservation, protection, and enhancement of fish, wildlife,

plants and their habitats", said Tom Kerr, refuge/district manager.

A gregarious group of over 120 students and adults were elated to gather for the dinner celebration. The potluck dinner included a variety of foods with plenty of desserts. The most popular and imaginative dessert was made by Pam Ekholm, mother of students Donny and Emily Ekholm, who created a chocolate cake masterpiece of her own with blue frosting to simulate flowing water, twisted fruit roll ups to act as aquatic vegetation, Swedish fish to serve as coaster brook trout and rock candy to emulate the gravel bottoms in Whittlesey Creek, which is essential substrate for successful coaster brook trout spawning. "Nooooo waaaay, that's so awesome!" said fourth grader Pooja Geisen. "Can I have a big piece with a coaster brook trout please?"

After dinner, the fast moving current of rippling participants spilled into the Martin Hanson Theater for a memorable culmination of photos depicting students reflecting and connecting with nature throughout the school year, complimented with inspirational background music that brought tears to the eyes of some audience members. While shaking hands with Kevin Lowry, Chuck Perry, father of student Jake Perry, said "That was incredibly inspirational and I want to thank you for your hard work and dedication."

Afterwards, students, with their scanned art work and poems up on the big screen for audience viewing, proudly stood up front and read their poems to the large, supportive audience. After being



Above: Kelsey Defoe, front and center, is all smiles as she is featured on this year's cover of the River Of Words book. Kelsey is pictured with (L to R) Tom Kerr, refuge/district manager; Mrs. Kucinski, her 4th grade teacher; Step Mother Amanda Bresette; Mother, Tracey Defoe; Matt Larson, 4th grade teacher and Kevin Lowry, visitor services manager. The book cover features Kelsey reflecting and connecting with nature as she observes a cattail head near a wetland on the Center's campus. USFWS photo.



congratulated by Lowry, students received their original art work and poems as well as a copy of the 2010 *River of Words* book, which features student Kelsey Defoe on the front cover reflecting and connecting with nature as she observes a cattail head near a wetland on the Center's campus.

The highly coveted books are requested each year and sent to the Service's Midwest Regional and Washington Offices as well as to Congressman Obey and Senators Feingold, Kohl, Jach and their staff. When Kelsey's Mother, Tracey Defoe, heard her daughter was going to be featured on the book cover "she was extremely excited", said Sandy Kucinski, Defoe's teacher. After viewing her daughter's art work and poem, Tracey simply grinned and quietly stated, "Kelsey never seems to amaze me." Then briefly paused and added, "I'm just so proud of her."

The ROW program would not be possible without the strong support and dedication from Washburn fourth grade teachers, Sandy Kucinski and Matt Larson; their district director and principal for Washburn Elementary/ Middle Schools, Susan Masterson; volunteer art instructors, Jan Wise and Kris Edmunds; volunteer poetry instructor, Ted Gephart; Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge's visitor services manager, Kevin J. Lowry; and the numerous

parents who served as teacher assistants. After the celebration concluded, student William Torres, ran over to Lowry as well as Kerr and hugged both men while saying thank you repeatedly.

"Spending time outside is not only fun, but more importantly, it is healthy for the whole family", added Lowry. The Children In Nature Initiative is a federal program designed to encourage children to spend more time in

outdoor places you can visit. Start by doing something small, and see what happens from there! The possibilities are endless!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife

Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores

nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [HTTP://www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).

--Kevin J. Lowry, USFWS



Students are all smiles for the dinner celebration. USFWS photo.

the great outdoors. And it doesn't have to be somewhere far from home. It can be simple and safe. Take a walk in the forest, lie on your back in your backyard and watch the clouds roll by, turn over rocks in a stream and look for aquatic insects and other water dependent species, climb a tree, fish at a local lake, draw a picture of a tree and all the animals that live in it or have a picnic outside. Whether it is your own backyard, a local community park or a national wildlife refuge, there are lots of



The Division of Refuges Administrative Workgroup at Your Service

The Division of Refuges Administrative Workgroup (Workgroup) was formed in 2007 for the purpose of addressing concerns and issues that affect our field office administrative staff in their day to day operations, and professional development.

The Workgroup consists of six volunteers from the field station administrative community with Jodi Lehmann, Regional Office (RO) Refuges, as the consistent member. Each member commits to working with the group for two years and dedicates two to three hours a month working on administrative issues. Since its inception, the Workgroup has been involved in a number of projects identified as priority by refuge administrative officers (AO)s. A few of the topics that have been addressed are as follows:

- Looked at various options to efficiently provide support to multiple offices through mentoring and/or providing temporary assistance during vacancies.

- Created an AO Call List which provided a list of field AOs and areas they are confident in to provide assistance.
- Created an AO Desk Guide which provided day to day operational guidance, resources and helpful hints on how to negotiate daily activities.

Currently, the group is working on various ways to recognize the contributions that the Professional Field Administrative Staff makes to the Service. Present workgroup members are pictured below: Jean Collette, Detroit Lakes WMD, Jill Evers, Cypress Creek NWR, Denise Gilsrud, Minnesota Valley NWR, Carolyn Gregory, Great River NWR, Mark Rarey, Muscatatuck NWR, and Laurie Tansy, Seney NWR.

Please contact any of these members if you have any questions and/or concerns or send an e-mail to FW3 AOWG.

--- Denise Gilsrud and Jean Collette



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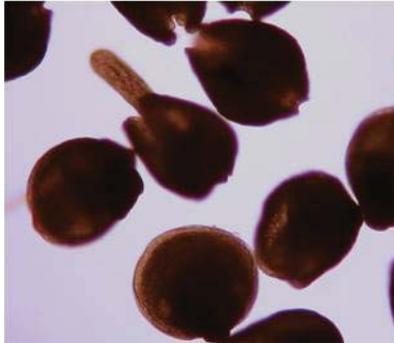
Around the Region Lemonade Anyone?

Remember the old adages, “Patience is a virtue.” or the Boy Scout motto, “Be prepared.” These phrases are part of an all too familiar autumn mantra I have muttered at times over the past decade to comfort myself and colleagues while working to recover the St. Croix River (SCR) population of endangered winged mapleleaf mussels.

Heck, we had to set up everything in the wet lab three years in a row (2001-2003) before enough mussel glochidia were available to finally identify blue catfish and confirm channel catfish as suitable host fish to propagate the winged mapleleaf.

So early last fall, after building a new flow-through test system in the lab to identify the optimum size of catfish needed to maximize juvenile winged mapleleaf production, I was prepared for the cold, hard fact that later came in an e-mail stating “No glochidia are available for testing in 2009”.

Given this latest “lemon” in my winged mapleleaf saga, I was determined not to waste the annual effort used to prepare the lab for



Above: Planned tests at a USGS lab will determine the optimum size of channel catfish needed to maximize production of juvenile winged mapleleaf mussels for SCR recovery efforts. Photo credit: USGS.

this planned work. The new test system was designed to simulate typical SCR water temperatures over the period from October to June. But the ability to maintain the proper mix of available heat-exchange equipment and flow rates needed to chill and maintain a dependable flow of fresh water at greater than nine degrees celsius, continuously for several months, remained uncertain. Therefore, the wet lab was subsequently transformed into a virtual test kitchen for preparing some well-chilled “lemonade”.

After weeks of systematically altering compressor settings, flow rates, test chamber volumes, and plumbing systems to document corresponding fluxes in water temperature throughout the test system, a “cookbook” of “recipes” was developed for producing reliable flows of water at temperatures that spanned an eleven-degree range (8-19°C) in test chambers.

The new test system proved fully functional, dependable, and is now available for temperature-dependent work with winged

mapleleaf mussels. It’s too early to tell if winged mapleleaf glochidia will be available for testing in 2010, but we’ll be ready and patiently waiting for them, same time next year. In the mean time ... how about some lemonade?

--Mark Steingraber

Conservation Planning Fiscal Year 2009 Accomplishments

Two national planning awards went to Region 3 projects in 2009. The Upper Mississippi river National Fish and Wildlife Refuge’s CCP received the Outstanding Plan award and the staff of Crab Orchard NWR received the Best Support of Planning award.

The GIS staff published the national FWS Cadastral to the public GIS website for distribution and prepared memorandum of understandings for the use of Natural Heritage Inventory data with the states of Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin.

Conservation planning also completed three plans in FY 2009: the Seney NWR CCP, the Kirtland’s Warbler Wildlife Management Area CCP and the Muscatatuck NWR CCP. Among other accomplishments, the division has now completed CCPs for 47 refuges, or 76 percent of the plans Congress requires completed by 2012.

Below: A wide range of water temperature settings are possible in this new flow-through test system designed for winged mapleleaf mussel research at the UMESC in La Crosse, Wisconsin. USFWS photo.



Around the Region

Ohio Youth Wins Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today a single hooded merganser was selected to appear on the 2010-2011 Federal Junior Duck Stamp. The design for the new stamp, painted by 18-year old Rui Huang of Columbus, Ohio, was chosen by a panel of judges at the National Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest held at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul.

The prisma-color entry, which previously won the Ohio State Junior Duck Stamp Contest, was judged the winner among Best-of-Show entries from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The 2010-2011 Junior Duck Stamp, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sells for \$5 to stamp collectors, conservationists, and the general public will be released on June 25, 2010. Proceeds from Junior Duck Stamp sales support environmental and conservation education efforts, and awards for contest winners.

"I'm excited to celebrate our winning artist and all of the young people who participate in the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program each year," said Rowan Gould, acting director of the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service. "As we mark the 40th anniversary of Earth Day this week, we look to our younger generation as stewards of conservation and the keepers of our Earth for the generations that follow them."

Ciara Davis, age 18, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, took second place with an acrylic painting depicting a pair of hooded mergansers.

Third place went to Miri Kim, age

15, of Charlestown, Rhode Island for her rendition of a red-breasted merganser.



Rui Huang's winning depiction of a hooded merganser. © Rui Huang

The 2010 Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Message Contest winner was Patrick Hull from Arizona, with his entry:

"Wildlife speaks only the truth about our planet's future, but our greatest challenge is learning to listen."

The National Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest is the culmination of a year-long Junior Duck Stamp conservation curriculum used by educators across the nation. This year, more than 26,000 Junior Duck Stamp design entries were entered to be judged during State competitions held from February until mid-April. The judges are people active in the local wildlife art or conservation community.

The top three entries from among the state Best-of-Show winners were chosen today by a panel of five judges. The Junior Duck Stamp Contest winner receives a free trip in June to the First Day of Sale Ceremony for the Federal Duck Stamp, along

with their parent. The first-place winner receives a \$5,000 award. The second place winner receives \$3,000, the third-place winner receives \$2,000, and the Conservation Message winner receives \$500.

Judges for this year's national Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest included the 2010-2011 Federal Duck Stamp artist Robert Bealle; Jason Parsons, who won the first Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest in 1993; Glenn Chambers, a research biologist and environmental educator; Ron Lawrenz, director of the Warner Nature Center in Marine on St. Croix, Minn.; and wildlife photographer Karen Hollingsworth. The alternate judge was Jud Dayton, a patron of the arts and lifelong birder.

The First Day of Sale Ceremony for the 2010-2011 Federal and Junior Duck Stamps will be held on June 25, at the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World at the Arundel Mills Mall in Hanover, Md. It is free and open to the public. Both the Federal and Junior Duck Stamp artists will be available to sign stamps and covers at this event, and the U.S. Postal Service will have a special cancellation on-hand for collectors.

For more information and a complete list of images and contest results, please see the Duck Stamp Program's home page at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/> or the Junior Duck Stamp Program's home page at <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck>.

--Rachel Levin and Joshua Winchell

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

2010 Jr. Duck Stamp Contest

Science Museum
St. Paul, Minnesota



1. Student poses next to her art submission. 2. Ashley Spratt was the lead on the Duck Stamp event. 3. Rick Rottman, volunteer lead, clarifies some questions. USFWS photos by Valerie Rose Redmond.



1. Judges place their chips. 2. Science museum coordinator pauses for a quick photo. 3. Volunteers from the RO smile for the camera. 4. Judges examine the many submissions. 5. Judges score the winning piece. 6. John Christian weighs in. 7. Science museum leads smile for the camera. USFWS photos by Valerie Rose Redmond.

Jr. Duck Stamp Contest

Science Museum, St. Paul, Minn.



1-4. Duckstamp kids. 5. Onlookers admire the many works of art. 6. Boyscouts pause before the flag bearing. 7. L to R: Jerome Ford, Deputy Assistant Director for Migratory Birds, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with Midwest Region Director Tom Melius (R) present teacher recognition awards to Sheila Heth (RC) of the Bureau Valley High School in Manlius, Ill. and Carolyn Blankenship (LC) of Pine Island Public School in Pine Island, Minn. USFWS photos by Valerie Rose Redmond.

Jr. Duck Stamp Contest

See all photos here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmidwest/sets/72157623832753325/>



Civil Servant Awards

Every year, the Federal Executive Board names Civil Servants of the Year from among federal employees in Minnesota. This year, it was announced that Dan Dearborn and Jeff Gosse have been selected as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Civil Servants of the Year. The contributions made by Dearborn and Gosse in 2009 reflect the dedication, creativity and skill that make the Service a leader among our peers.

Dearborn, a zone fire management officer, was nominated for his work during the record-setting floods in 2009 on the Red River. When the Service was asked by emergency management officials for experienced airboat operators and crews to evacuate people and protect property in Fargo, Dearborn stepped up to the task. Dearborn, who has extensive incident command experience in prescribed and wildfire suppression, assumed incident command and directed the assembly and deployment of 22

experienced airboat operators, mechanics, and team leaders. For six weeks airboat crews under Dearborn's direction evacuated people and helped with relief and protection efforts. As Region 3's regional energy coordinator, Jeff Gosse helped coordinate selection of projects to protect migratory bird habitat in four states as part of a \$4 million conservation plan



Above: Civil Servant of the Year, Jeff Gosse. USFWS photo by Valerie Rose Redmond.

for a major natural gas pipeline project. Gosse developed a \$1 million multi-years proposal under the Administration's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to identify important migratory bird areas in the Great Lakes to facilitate environmentally sensitive siting of wind projects. Gosse contributed

to a national effort to develop wind project guidelines being developed by a Federal Advisory Committee administered by the Service.

Civil Servants of the Year are awarded to federal employees who distinguish themselves by sustained, superior performance, special acts, community service or other noteworthy contributions. Dan and Gosse will be recognized with award winners from other agencies at a ceremony in May, and will be considered for recognition as one of FEB's top five federal employees.

--Georgia Parham
External Affairs

Celebrating International Migratory Bird Day

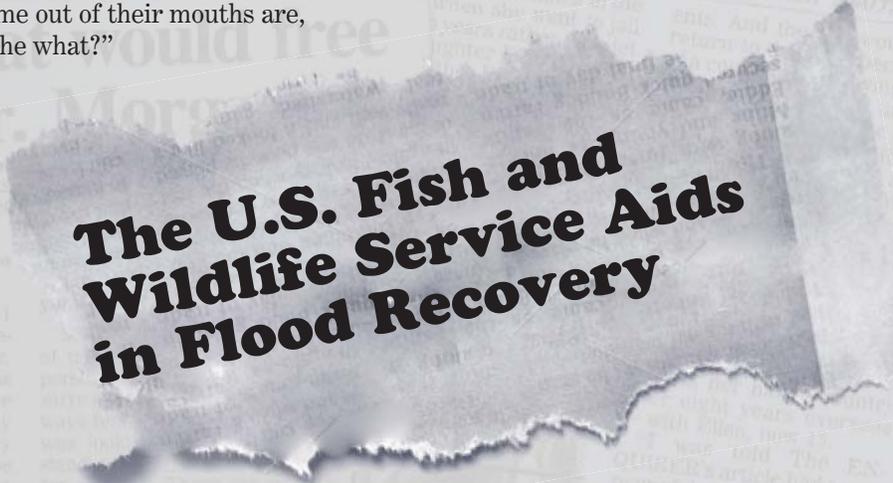
Audubon Minnesota and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (Service) are co-hosting a free Kids' Birdwatching Fair on Saturday, May 8th, 2010 from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge's Bloomington Visitor Center.

The event is designed for youth grades 6 and younger but all ages are welcome. Participants will see live raptors up close, witness bird banding, improve their birding skills, and can attend the Jr. Duck Stamp Contest winners Ceremony. Each child will receive a sticker book of common birds that can be seen in the area, and all attendees will get a free lunch.

HEADLINES

Making FWS Headlines@ Issue: Human Relevancy

Prior to seeking employment with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), I had never heard of the agency. That's because it had not impacted my world--at least I was not aware that it had impacted my world. I'd heard of the Endangered Species Act, but I made no connection to the Service and had no connection to the Act itself. People in my circle know about the Service now because they know someone who works here, namely me. But to this day, if I say anything about a duck stamp contest, the first words that inevitably come out of their mouths are, "The what?"



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aids in Flood Recovery

That's because it had not impacted their world.

The work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) holds great significance. And its sound scientific foundation in its decision making is unquestionable. Neither is its relevance, particularly to those already attuned to the contributions of the service, that is to say, traditional conversationalists and people

who fish and hunt. The people behind the work--the people on the ground that are ultimately making a difference on the landscape understand better than anyone the significance of the accomplishments and contributions of the Service to the conservation of wildlife and habitat. But does the public?

What is at issue here is human relevance. The general public tends to get engaged and pay attention when they understand how these issues are affecting them personally or the people that they know

and love. This may manifest in a number of ways. For example, Deputy Regional Director Charlie Wooley has been all over the news and testifying in Washington about the Asian Carp invasion. This issue impacts people in a number of ways. Not only is a 100 pound fish jumping out of the water to slap a reporter in the face, a visually if not painfully compelling image, but the Asian Carp story also hits people in a personal way. Why? Because people recognize that their recreational fishing

On News Relevancy

"Human environment interaction matters, and I think that many environment and science people--not the journalists, but people who actually work in these fields--don't really know how to translate their information from research papers into a news story and make it relevant to the humans that are going to be reading about these issues, or are impacted by these issues. You also see stories out there in trade magazines, or even in governmental publications that are very focused on what they are charged with protecting or supervising, but the story doesn't really have relevance for anybody outside their fields because they haven't told the public how it's relevant. And that, 'relevance,' is what turns an internal report into an external news story. To whom does this issue matter; how does it matter; is it something that the public should respond to in some way... that's how you make a story really interactive. This is not just something I'm going to tell you, but this is something you need to respond to. "

--Former CNN
Environmental Reporter
Camille Feanny

Continued on next page.

HEADLINES

Making FWS Headlines@ Issue: Human Relevancy

trips in the Great Lakes may be threatened because of Asian Carp encroachment. Suddenly it's personal and hits home. In the case of Midwest floods, people's homes, properties, and lives were at stake. The disastrous spill in the Gulf lead the news for many days and is still prevalent in the news because it's both an environmental and economic crisis that is effecting the livelihoods of countless

response. Such as the consumption of bushmeat, as related to wildlife extinction. An issue may have both an emotional and a personal effect, but from a different segments of the population, as was the case of the delisting and relisting of the gray wolf. Factual information revolving around

formaldehyde and other indoor pollutants. Suddenly, the news



Asian Carp Threaten Great Lakes Fish Population

individuals who live and work on the coast. An issue may not have a direct effect, but it may cause an heightened emotional reaction that triggers a

environmental consequences of methane gas emission from cows may cause a family to limit their red meat intake.

Stories take on a different perspective when people experience the effects of it or are impacted by it in some way. In a recent interview with former CNN environmental reporter, Camille Feanny, the discussion turned to human relevance. She mentioned a small story she'd covered on how plug-in air fresheners emit

story took on a completely different perspective for me, as I knew, while we were speaking, I had one plugged in at home. Feanny received a huge response from this story.

Whatever the case may be, the WFIM effect always comes into play when a governmental agency asks the public to care about an issue. What's in it for me? Or how is this effecting me? The connection must be there in order to escalate up the ladder to external news. When reporting scientific facts, a personal impact translation is a critical component to making headlines.

--Valerie Rose Redmond,
External Affairs



<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/May 2010>

Feanny's E-beat Continued from page 18.

more desirous of helping other groups that I see as vulnerable... to respond to those issues. And I consider children, especially orphaned children to be among the most vulnerable." That is why she says when she goes out to do interviews, she doesn't just interview the adults that are taking care of the children, but the children as well. "I actually want to understand the perspective of the children themselves," she says.

Perspective is also key when it comes to the Service's initiative, Connecting People to Nature, and understanding the perceived disconnect with African-Americans. What bears some consideration is the notion that African-Americans do indeed engage in nature, but perhaps in non-traditional ways. Similarly, Feanny has learned in her many travels covering the E-beat, that because African-American homes are many times negatively impacted by environmental problems, they are indeed concerned with these issues, as well. "Perhaps for some African-Americans," she says, "they don't engage in environmental topics in the same way as other groups." Feanny says her global experience as a producer has given her insight to the fact that organizing oversight and activist groups and being effective as a whole, takes significant time, money and sustained support. That's

why imagery tools like profiling the African-American experience in natural and environmental issue related settings is a critical strategy. Feanny agrees. "Perhaps this perception, like I said before, when people ask me do African-Americans care about the environment, maybe their interactions with the environment are just less public than other people's interaction with the environment" she says, pointing out the cost associated with organization, publicity and sustained support.

"All we see is a concept of African-Americans through one lens and usually the lens is not our own. And usually the lens that is not our own focuses on aspects of our culture that in large part, may not even be fact based. Maybe if more of us are profiled who are doing unconventional things as far as career choices who are exploring unconventional recreational activities—unconventional sporting activities, unconventional in mainstream views about who African-Americans are, maybe more attention will be placed on us and people like us and then the realization will be that there are more people who are—more African Americans who are involved broadly in environment and science issues than we care to acknowledge."

Feanny says that reporters often pursue stories of personal interest to them. "For instance," she says "in addition to breaking news, I also pitched stories that mattered to me, and stories about which I held a

personal interest."

Another inroad is a tie to a pressing issue or an issue that's already in focus or one that has an impact on a large population. Journalists also run with stories that start out local, she says. She points out a fairly recent story of iguana and python overpopulation in south Florida that became national news when a python literally exploded after trying to swallow an alligator. "That's a case of biting off more than one can chew," Feanny jokes, with what is an infectious laugh. Good stories rise. This she says because reporters read local papers, blogs and news feeds, in addition to receiving calls from government agencies and academics that they have built relationships with.

While she has had her fingers on the pulse of the e-beat for more than 10 years at CNN, it is the plight of orphans that motivates Feanny these days. True to her nature, she is now a Ph.D. candidate in applied anthropology, studying how she can use her applied knowledge to help children around the world.

--Valerie Rose Redmond
External Affairs