

News Release



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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces Endangered Species *Recovery Champion* Award Winners

Residents of Maine, Massachusetts Honored

The story of endangered species conservation in the United States over the past 40 years involves many heroes. Today, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recognized 61 of these heroes for their outstanding efforts to conserve and protect endangered and threatened fish, wildlife and plants by designating them 2012 *Recovery Champions*. Among the award winners honored for their work were Steve Koenig, the executive director of SHARE (Salmon Habitat and River Enhancement) in Downeast Maine, and Joris Naiman, former attorney for the Service's Northeast Region.

“Recovery Champion awards acknowledge individuals and groups who have excelled in their efforts to protect and recover our most imperiled species,” said Service Director Dan Ashe. “They exemplify the dedication and determination that has helped save countless animals and plants from extinction and that continues to raise the bar in the field of endangered species conservation.”

Through SHARE, Steve Koenig has drawn attention to the many problems that poorly designed road-stream crossings have on the recovery of endangered Atlantic salmon and other native fish species. Since 2005, SHARE has either removed or replaced 159 culverts in streams that now allow unobstructed fish passage and natural stream functions. Koenig's innovative stream restoration technique has improved 85 miles of salmon habitat, while encouraging partners to pursue similar projects.

Joris Naiman, the first attorney from a Service solicitor's office to receive this award, made outstanding contributions to the recovery of threatened and endangered species across the Northeast. While his work was behind the scenes, his contributions were vital to the Service's effective implementation of the Endangered Species Program.

“The protection of endangered wildlife depends on the dedicated efforts of people like Joris Naiman and Steve Koenig who have contributed to the future of America's outdoors,” says Service Northeast Region Director Wendi Weber. “We are honored to have partnered with them and are inspired by their passion for threatened and endangered species.”

The *Recovery Champion* awards began in 2002 as a one-time recognition for Service staff members for their achievements in conserving listed species. However, in 2007, the program was expanded to honor Service partners as well, recognizing their essential role in the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

For information about the 2012 Recovery Champions, please visit: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/recovery-champions/index.html>.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. To learn more about the Service's Endangered Species program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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