

**For Immediate Release**

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**Northeast Region refuge selected for Department of Energy 2010 Federal Energy and Water Management Award**

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge is one of two Fish and Wildlife Service facilities in the nation to have been selected for a Department of Energy 2010 Federal Energy and Water Management Award. The refuge, located in Newburyport, Mass., received the award for its installation of a new 32.48 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system and conversion from a fuel oil-fired to a natural gas-fired heating, ventilation and air conditioning system for its visitor center and administration building.

In 2004, the Parker River NWR Visitor Center and Administration Building won this same award from the Department of Energy, as well as a Federal Energy Saver Showcase Designation. That same year, the Parker River NWR facility also received a Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award and a Fish and Wildlife Service Environmental Leadership Award, and was named a National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Facility of the Year.

The 2009 installation has substantially reduced the carbon footprint of the already sustainable Parker River NWR Visitor Center and Administrative Headquarters. Energy use was already reduced 41 percent from a traditional office building because of features of the building's design, such as southeast building orientation and day lighting, "super insulation" of the building envelope, high-efficiency lighting, and a geothermal open-loop ground-source heat pump. Unfortunately, the geothermal system ultimately failed, due to highly corrosive groundwater from the formerly used site, despite its having been restored to natural habitat. The Service overcame this setback, and reduced its carbon footprint by installing a solar photovoltaic system that generates approximately 48 megawatt hours per year and supplies 42 percent of the center's electrical needs, and a natural gas-fired ENERGY STAR® heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. This installation contributed significantly to the refuge's 43 percent drop in energy intensity from its 2003 baseline and has saved 31 metric tons of greenhouse gases to date. Over 255,000 visitors annually can view the performance of the solar system on a website and display in the visitor center.

The award winners will be honored at an evening reception on Wednesday, October 6, and the Department of Energy 2010 Federal Energy and Water Management Awards will be presented at a luncheon ceremony on Thursday, October 7, in Washington, D.C.

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