

## **Pacific Regional Director Robyn Thorson, Honored with Ira Gabrielson Award**

Pacific Regional Director Robyn Thorson is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2011 recipient of the distinguished Ira Gabrielson Award. The award, established in 2002, is named after Ira Gabrielson, the Service's first Director. The honoree is selected by the Service's Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP).

The award is presented annually to "an outstanding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employee making a significant contribution to conservation, and a person who reflects the powerful commitment and leadership qualities of Dr. Gabrielson." Cindy Fury of the Service's Tallahassee Migratory Bird Field Office presented the award to Robyn during a recent ceremony attended by more than 500 people.

The leadership qualities and criteria used to select the honorees include vision, determination, commitment, integrity, and leadership. Robyn has demonstrated these qualities in a diverse range of leadership positions in the Service in addition to her present position as Regional Director of the Pacific Region, including Regional Director of the Midwest Region, Assistant Director for External Affairs, Deputy Regional Director and Associate Regional Director for the Alaska Region, Assistant Regional Director for Budget and Administration for the Southwest Region, Special Assistant to the Deputy Director, and Associate Regional Chief Biologist for the USGS Biological Resources Division

In all of these positions, Robyn has consistently demonstrated vision, using innovative and forward-thinking leadership. She has approached challenges during a fast-paced and swiftly changing era with a fresh perspective, and has a proven ability to lead through adversity by building coalitions. She often reminds staff that achieving the Service's mission "is all about relationships" and demonstrates this again and again through her actions. While in the Midwest Region, she was the driving force behind the establishment of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, one of the largest stakeholder committees ever established. Robyn's incredible commitment to hear and understand the opinions of others was a foundation for the development of this group.

Since joining Region 1, Robyn has looked for new ways to develop different kinds of relationships. Robyn's has made climate change a Service priority, and has worked to implement Landscape Conservation Cooperatives as a collaborative approach to our changing environment, always with scientific integrity as the foundation. Her support of the "I gave 8" program encourages Pacific Region employees' efforts in Connecting People with Nature, with over 5,000 hours donated since the program's inception. She has helped stabilize the Region during a difficult period of time, especially with uncertain economics and politics, the loss of Director Sam Hamilton, and ever-changing conservation challenges. Robyn has embraced the electronic world, using social media as a primary communication tool to reach the public. Under her direction, Region 1 piloted the use of Twitter for the Service nationwide. New ideas are often associated with risk,

and Robyn's commitment to innovation is a reflection of the trust and confidence she has in the employees of this agency.

Internally, many of us have experienced the value Robyn places on personal relationships. When she visits field stations and offices, we are asked to sign her books and share our stories, personal and professional. Robyn's personal interest, genuine warmth and care for others are apparent in the delight she takes in meeting the people around her and how she remembers conversations and details for years. She shows us how proud she is of the work that we do as public employees and the contributions we make to our society.

Please join us in congratulating Robyn on this well-deserved recognition.



Photo caption: Cindy Fury presents Robyn Thorson with the 2011 Ira Gabrielson Award. Mary Stefanski from Region 3 crafted the stained glass piece. The tree with many branches represents nature, the need to grow, and the many lives Robyn continues to touch.