

Part V Special Events

Centennial Handbook



Ever wonder if there's an easier way to prepare for an event? Here are some helpful tips.

Special Event Tip Sheet

Events can be large or small, simple or grand.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial provides a tremendous opportunity to showcase the Service's work, to highlight unique areas, and to address the Refuge System's greatest resource-related needs. Our efforts to link special events to this Centennial will increase public understanding and appreciation for the Refuge System, enhance partnership involvement, and increase awareness about fish and wildlife resources.

The Refuge System's Centennial anniversary on March 14, 2003 will mark 100 years of commitment to wildlife and habitat conservation. This milestone offers a unique opportunity for strategic, coordinated outreach showcasing the System's conservation legacy. It is also an excellent vehicle to highlight and enhance all Service programs, and chronicle a pivotal moment in the history of wildlife conservation in America.

The Service has a long history of hosting events on refuges, hatcheries, at regional offices, and at off-site locations. Events can involve one or more activities and may include a day-long assortment of presentations, demonstrations, and other items of interest to visitors. Here are some examples to consider for celebrating the Centennial.

Open Houses

- Celebrate a new exhibit or new facility.
- Celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week by opening your refuge and/or visitor center to the public.

Anniversary Celebrations

- Celebrate the establishment of your refuge.

Dedications

- Dedicate a new trail or the acquisition of a new parcel of land.

Media Event

- Turn your activity into a media event by inviting members of the media to cover a wildlife spectacle at your refuge or a visit by a distinguished guest.

Community Leaders Day or Volunteer Appreciation Day

- Honor those who have supported your refuge by hosting a special day for them.

National or International Observances

- National Wildlife Refuge System Birthday (March 14)
- National Wildlife Refuge Week
- National Fishing and Boating Week
- International Migratory Bird Day
- Earth Day

Special Event Tip Sheet

Invited Guests

Service events are usually open to the public, although some may be by invitation only. Guests can be invited through a news release to local papers, by posted community flyers, or by personally addressed invitations to refuge friends and supporters.

Most events offer the potential to reach out to VIPs. Consider the magnitude of your event and the appropriate level of VIPs to invite. VIP participation at your event will increase local interest and raise news media attention. Consider inviting the following audiences:

Department

- Secretary
- Deputy Secretary
- Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Agency

- Director
- Deputy Director
- Assistant Directors
- Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
- Regional Director
- Assistant Regional Directors
- Division Chiefs
- Project Leaders
- Staff from the event area

Other Federal Agencies

- Superintendents and Forest Supervisors from nearby national parks and national forests
- District Engineers of the Army Corps of Engineers
- Commanding officers of military bases

Congress

- Members of Congress from the state(s) involved
- Associated Washington and District office staff
- Staff of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
- The House Resources Committee
- The Appropriations Committee

State, County, Local Officials

- Governor
- Director of State Fish and Game Agency
- Managers of state hatcheries or wildlife management areas
- Conservation commission members
- Mayors or city managers
- County commissioners
- Town supervisors
- University and college presidents
- Local school principals

Others

- Tribal leaders
- Local conservation organization representatives
- Local television and newspaper reporters
- Representatives of local chambers of commerce
- Outdoor writers
- Contractors involved in site construction
- Community opinion leaders
- Service volunteers

How to Invite a Member of Congress to Your Special Event

The key to getting a Member of Congress to attend your event is contacting his or her office far in advance of the date.

Know the Schedule

Congressional Representatives are elected every two years. Except for Alaska and some western states, Representatives typically spend every weekend at home, often doing business in their district on Monday and Friday. Senators may or may not spend every weekend in their respective states. The Senate is often in session five days a week, making it hard for the western Members to travel every week. In general, Members have incredibly busy days, usually divided into half-hour meetings with constituents, interest groups, staff and other Members. In addition, they may be called to vote at any time the House or Senate is in session.

The Invitation

Because of these busy schedules, it is essential that you make contact, both by phone and in writing, several weeks before your event. Members usually have a Washington, D.C.-based scheduler and a district—or state—scheduler. Depending on where your event will take place, send the appropriate scheduler a one-page letter of invitation that spells out all the details: purpose of the event, time, date and place, and expectations for the Member's participation. Will the press be there? Will the Member be asked to speak? Who else will be invited?

Follow Up

After you send your letter, follow up by telephone with the scheduler. Remember that he or she is also very busy, so don't be put off if it takes several attempts. At this point, be sure you call the appropriate legislative assistant in the Washington, D.C. office or your Regional Office point-of-contact just to let them know you have made a scheduling request.

The Member's scheduler may ask the policy staffer's advice to help prioritize the Member's commitments. Depending on the event, you may want to supplement your call with some background materials or talking points for the policy staffer. The chances of reaching your goal increase if you make it easier for the Congressional staff, who are typically overworked. Reconfirm with them when the meeting is set so it can be included in a "weekly Hill visits" memo sent to the Director.

Be Flexible

Once you have a commitment from the Member to attend, don't be surprised if things change before the event. Members have to respond to many demands on their time; in turn, their staff must also respond to Members' requests as competing issues or events occur. Much of a Member's day is driven by events on the Floor or by other unforeseen event. It never hurts to confirm; it always helps to be flexible.

Special Event Tip Sheet

Event Planning

In the Beginning

Special events take time and money, so consider this early in the planning process. Ask these questions: What will the event cost? Where will the money come from? Are there items that cannot be purchased with appropriated funds? Are there partners or foundations that may be able to help with event expenses?

Partnerships and close association with volunteers and Refuge Support Groups are critical to the success of Service events. Funding and staffing needs usually require volunteer help and support from organizations, foundations, private citizens, and local community agencies and groups. Unless specifically authorized by statute or as a necessary expense, Federal law prohibits the use of appropriated funds. Non-Service supporters, such as a Refuge Support Group, can provide donations and help with costs.

What Do You Want to Achieve?

Before a Refuge Support Group agrees to sponsor an event, decide what you want to achieve. For example, an event can be used to:

- build membership;
- get exposure for the group through publicity about the event;
- provide opportunities for the public to use the refuge in productive ways;
- educate children and adults.
- build partnerships;
- provide opportunities for volunteers;
- build relationships with your members;
- provide opportunities for leadership;
- have fun! and, of course,
- raise money.

Plan for Success

Special events require planning to succeed. Here are some suggestions for getting started and involving Refuge Support (Friends) Groups.

Decide on Your Event

Determine the appropriateness of the event, and what image it will project on our agency. Consider the amount of volunteer time needed, front money needed, repeatability and timing of the event and how it fits into your (Friends) fund-raising plan.

Not Sure What to Do for an Event?

The ideas are endless and Friends groups are not limited to holding events only on the refuge. Be creative. Here are a few examples:

- special excursions and tours of the refuge
- a festival celebrating the refuge
- programs on popular subjects with well-known speakers
- an art event/contest
- a dinner, picnic or barbecue
- an auction of art, antiques or donated merchandise, a silent auction
- a rummage or tag sale
- a sports or recreational event (e.g. road race, golf tournament)

Set a Schedule

One way to develop a schedule is to work backwards from the event, deciding what needs to be done each week and month beforehand. This should give you a good estimate of when it's feasible for your Friends group to hold the event. News releases must be prepared and sent out well in advance. Fund raising may need to start a year in advance; many businesses make decisions about donations at the beginning of their fiscal year and turn-around time for a grant can be six months or more.

Establish—and Empower—a Committee

The committee should be chaired, or co-chaired, by a strong leader who is organized, able to communicate and keep track of details, and get people excited.

Give the committee full responsibility and authority to get the job done. Set up periodic reporting times to check-in and make sure they are headed in the right direction.

Prepare a Plan

The Event Committee will need to prepare a plan that describes the “who, what, when, where, why, and how.” For the plan, consider the following.

- What is the event, where and when will it happen?
- What is the goal (what will the event accomplish)?
- Who will lead each component of the event?
- How many volunteers will you need, who will recruit, who will oversee?
- Who do you need as partners?
- Who will take care of publicity?
- What supplies are needed?
- How much will it cost and where will funds come from?
- Who will raise funds and get donated services?
- How will the event make money (e.g., sell items, silent auction)?

Once the Committee has answered these questions it should be easy to create a master schedule of activities. This schedule should include a time line to complete each step and identify who will be responsible for each step.

Post-Event Debriefing

Immediately after the event, talk with the committee about what went well, what could be done better, what not to do again, and what new activities can be added next time.

To Sum It Up

Make the event work for you. Decide how the event will help the Refuge Support Group and field station and have fun doing it! A successful event will promote the Refuge Support Group, the refuge, and conservation. You will have gained a lot of exposure, new partners and friends even if they don't make much money (if that is the goal).

NOTE

“Building Your Nest Egg—An Introduction to Raising Funds for National Wildlife Refuge Support Groups” by Beverly Heinze-Lacey is now available through the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Service Headquarters Office or National Conservation Training Center Publications Unit. This is a publication of the National Wildlife Refuge Association in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Special Event Tip Sheet

Advertising and Publicity

The general policy of the Department is to not use paid advertising in any publication in connection with its programs and activities, except where special legal requirements and authority exist (for example, to encourage public participation in the development of Environmental Impact Statements, Comprehensive Conservation Plans, or other formal processes.) Prior approval must be obtained by your Service Public Affairs Office and the Department's Office of Communication. (Additional information on paid advertising can be found in the Media Section of this handbook.)

So, keeping this in mind, how do you get the word out? You would be surprised to find that many businesses, organizations, radio, magazines, newspapers, and TV will donate space. Several creative examples follow.

Billboards

Local advertising companies might donate sign space. Another possibility is to convince billboard advertisers to share their space by adding a promotional banner displaying the special event name, date and location. Such banners can be tagged to the top, bottom or center of an existing billboard.

Marquees

A surprising number of businesses have changeable marquees that could be used to publicize your special event.

Event Calendars

Your local Chamber of Commerce, State Department of Tourism, and convention or visitors bureaus publish an annual calendar of events. Check with them directly to find out how to be included in any events they produce. Other groups also publish these types of calendars.

Grocery Bags

Ask a local grocery chain to print reminders about your event on their paper or plastic bags.

Milk Cartons

Sometimes locally owned dairies will provide milk carton space for promoting community events.

Movie Theater Trailers

Below are excerpts taken from an article about how San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex worked with their local theater chain to get movie trailers depicting the Refuge System shown in local theaters.

“San Diego refuges make the big screen . . . This year we developed a new partnership to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week. We worked with local movie theaters to promote the Service through on-screen advertising. Our plan was to provide high quality slides of Service activities to be used as advertising before and between movie features. We discovered that almost all of San Diego's theaters are owned by chains whose corporate offices or marketing departments are in Los Angeles. From there it was a matter of talking to marketing directors, sending letters, providing samples of slides, and waiting for a response. We produced the slides at a local film processing and graphic design house that does movie slides for another theater chain. The total cost of slides and shipping to the distributor was approximately \$250.

As a result, Pacific Theaters gave us 72 screens at 10 of their San Diego County theaters and ran six of our slides in rotation, about three times before every movie, for three weeks –worth about \$6,500 in advertising. They aired these slides as public service announcements during Refuge Week, at no charge.”

Publicity

Poor attendance will undermine even the best organized event. Work with your Regional Public Affairs Office to ensure the event is well publicized in a timely manner.

Approximately two weeks before the event, draft a news release, media alert, and public service announcements detailing the event and describing the planned activities.

Provide brief event announcements to groups that publish a calendar of events.

Sending a 30 second public service announcement to radio and television stations may reach listeners who would otherwise not learn of the event. (See Media Section of this handbook for additional information on publicity.)

Task Checklist for Special Events

This checklist was created by folks who have experience putting on special events.

Just so you don't forget anything...

Pre-event

- Designate an event coordinator
- Meet with staff and partners, and form committees
- Check on local event schedules
- Consult Public Affairs about upcoming FWS events
- Select an event date and place (include rain day alternatives)
- Secure permits (fire, building, assembly, police, health and sanitation, etc.) where needed
- Advise Public Affairs and local information centers of event date
- Confirm availability of VIP speakers
- Issue confirmation letters through Public Affairs to VIP speakers
- Arrange VIP lodging
- Arrange VIP transportation

Event Funding

- Outline FWS event expenditures
- Establish budget
- Designate support group to handle donations and non-FWS funding

Invitations

- Develop guest mailing list
- Coordinate development, design, and production of invitation with Regional Office Publications Coordinator
- Distribute invitations to local dignitaries and the public

Program

- Develop program for event which may include:
 - Formal ceremony
 - Activities
 - Exhibits
 - Guided walks
 - Tours
 - Demonstrations
 - Entertainment
 - Refreshments
 - Ribbon cutting
 - Sign unveiling
 - Ground breaking
 - Presentation plaque or certificate
- Prepare talking points or draft speeches
- Select color guard and vocalists
- Arrange interpreter for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Design and produce program brochure and select staff to distribute
- Reserve needed exhibits and arrange to have them staffed on day of event
- Plan activities, walks, tours or demonstrations, and assign staff. Do a rehearsal, if needed
- Select cover to unveil sign
- Obtain ribbon and shears for ribbon-cutting
- For ground breaking, paint shovel gold and loosen soil so it will turn easily
- Design and procure plaques or certificates
- Determine entertainment needs (staging, electric, tables, etc.)
- Select refreshments and determine needs (tables, skirting, plates, cups, etc.)

Publicity

- Prepare media alert, press release, advance stories, public service announcements, flyers, and pitch feature stories to publicize event
- Contact media to cover story on the day of the event
- Select photo opportunity spot
- Prepare press packages
- Designate table and staff to greet and register news media
- Designate FWS event photographer and videographer

Grounds and Event Setup

- Select level area, mow and trim for placement of tents; tents should be situated so sun is not in speakers' eyes
- Contract for tents
- Podium with FWS emblem
- Sound system with backup equipment, contract for technician (your event will be ruined if people can't hear)
- Flags - display according to flag code
- Arrange for stage, including skirts, shrubs, flowers, steps, etc.
- Make arrangements for FWS banners
- Arrange for water and glasses for speakers
- Chairs (use labels to designate speaker's chairs and other reserved seating)
- Restroom or portable toilet service accessible to all participants
- Lights
- If no electricity, you will need a generator
- Trash receptacles

Support Services

- Prepare directional signs, assign staff to post
- Notify local EMT's, police, and fire departments
- First aid kits
- Notify FWS law enforcement officer
- Locate portable radios (make sure they are on same frequency)
- Arrange for shuttle transportation (busses, vans, etc.)
- Designate staff to direct traffic, park cars, and to shuttle or guide visitors
- Designate parking, seating and other areas to ensure access for guests with disabilities

Post-event Details

- Cleanup crew (break down stage, chairs, tables, exhibits)
- Return borrowed equipment
- Dispose of trash
- Remove portable toilets
- Media follow-up—provide photos, if needed
- Thank you letters
- Critique event

Region 1 Special Event Example

Spring Wings Bird Festival

Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Nevada

Event Coordinator
Janet Schmidt

Phone Number
775/428 6452

Event Location
Fallon Convention Center,
Fallon, Nevada

Date of Event
Mid-May

Time of Event
Friday noon to Sunday afternoon

Brief Description of Event

This annual celebration of the spring bird migration through Nevada's Lahontan Valley, a globally important bird area, includes tours, seminars, live demonstrations, a nature-related art and trade show, a banquet with keynote speaker, workshops, and activities and tours for kids.

Event Objectives

- Increase awareness of the importance of Lahontan Valley wetlands to migratory birds
- Enhance community support for wetlands conservation
- Promote the refuge as integral part of the community and an important contributor to the local economy
- Environmental education

Participation

The event attracts 600 - 1,000 visitors.

A How-to for this Event

All festivals and special events are going to have a different focus, and a different "hook", something to pull people in. The key is to determine the hook for your particular event and market that concept. For Spring Wings, the hook we use is the sheer numbers of the species we have, not the species themselves. For instance, the American white pelican is an ubiquitous bird, but Anaho Island NWR, part of the Stillwater NWR Complex, is the location of one of the largest breeding colonies in North America—that makes it a spectacle. Our other featured species are similar in concept: long-billed dowitcher, American avocet, black-necked stilt, and white-faced ibis. But the focus is on the potential for folks to see many, many of these at one time (and the reason this area is a designated Western Hemispheric

Shorebird Reserve Network site). A secondary hook for our festival is a celebrity keynote speaker. We are in a rural area but are close in proximity to the larger metropolitan area of Reno. We market in the California Central Valley as well. A celebrity speaker is defined as someone with national presence. We have used Gary Burghoff ("Radar" of M.A.S.H. fame); Evan Hirshe from the National Audubon Society; John Acorn, "The Nature Nut" from Animal Planet; and in the year our event will be a Centennial event our speakers will be Don and Lillian Stokes. Be aware that for some celebrities you need to start two years in advance asking for their participation, so for some Centennial events and some speakers, it's already too late—but it is always worth asking.

We have used a celebrity strategy to draw in those folks who are interested, but need something they can identify with—a name they have heard before—to really ensure their participation. This has worked well for us, but for events with a much smaller budget, it could be cost prohibitive. Speakers well-known in the local area also succeed in bringing people to your event and many of them will decline an honorarium, making them the perfect solution for your budgetary woes.

Now that you have decided your hook, you need to organize a timeline. This is crucial to the event. Many events are accomplished with a much more concentrated timeline; the one that follows is simply a general idea—a list of things to think about. Tailor these concepts to fit your particular project.

Twenty-four Months Before Event

- Develop VIP Policy (honorarium amount, transportation, lodging—what will you provide)
- Contact celebrity speaker (VIP)

Twelve Months Before Event

- Decide date and location of event
- Develop policies for speakers and exhibitors
- What will event provide—lodging, transportation (speakers)
- Decide how many speakers are needed
- Electricity, booth size, how many available spaces (exhibitors)
- Design booth registration forms
- Begin inviting speakers for seminars/workshops
- Decide on tours and capacity for each tour
- Decide on what novelties to sell—tee shirts, hats, etc.
- Develop a sponsor packet to hand out to prospective sponsors
- Include mission statement and goals, economic impacts

Nine Months Before Event

- Develop an advertising plan
- Decide what media to contact, gather contact information
- Request speaker biographies for media/brochure inclusion
- Begin exhibitor registration
- Begin developing registration form (find examples from other events)

Six Months Before Event

- Devise transportation plan—what vehicles? Carpool? Bus rental?
- Confirm tour leaders
- If national advertising is in your plan, begin contacts

Four Months Before Event

- Start volunteer search (local newspaper articles)
- Begin developing volunteer schedule
- Arrange VIP transportation

One Month Before Event

- Insurance—do you need it for your event if not on refuge?
- Develop evaluation forms for volunteers and for festival attendees

- Verify speaker/VIP arrangements
- Develop signage
- Confirm with tour leaders
- Local media blitz

One Week Before Event

- Volunteer orientation
- Dry runs of some tours
- Signage blitz

Tips from the Refuge Staff

Immediately afterwards, evaluate the event. Decide what worked and what could be improved. Request next year's participation for speakers, tour leaders, and exhibitors that worked this year. You can't start anything too early—if you can get something done right away—DO IT!! Time runs out quickly.

Media (Print and Broadcast) and Promotion

- Announcements in several national birding magazines
- News release to newspapers, television, and radio within a 100-mile radius
- Event website: www.springwings.org
- Mailing list to over 1,700 people nationwide

Partner Involvement

Partners include the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, State of Nevada, City of Fallon, Churchill County, and Lahontan Audubon Society. Spring Wings is a nonprofit corporation made up of volunteers from neighboring communities.

Budget

\$10,000 cash, \$10,000 in-kind donations. Budget needs vary with each festival, but the goal is to provide the community with a source of funds for environmental education grants and projects. This goal has not yet been met because the costs of the festival go up as it grows.

Funding Sources

Grants, business and agency sponsorships, registrations and tour fees

Region 2 Special Event Example

National Wildlife Refuge Week

Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, Arizona

Event Coordinator
Bonnie Swarbrick

Phone Number
520/823 4251

Event Location
Buenos Aires National Wildlife
Refuge, Sasabe, AZ

Date of Event
Second or third Saturday in October
during National Wildlife Refuge
Week

Time of Event
8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Brief Description of Event

Beginning in 1999, the Refuge has dedicated this day in honor of Chris Clarke, a staunch supporter of Buenos Aires NWR who passed away that year. The focus of the event that year was planting native trees at the Refuge riparian area at Arivaca Cienega. Activities included tree planting by local citizens, tributes by family members of Chris Clarke, a keynote speech, and live hawks and owls with interpretation.

Additional Event Activities

The event continues to be designated as Chris Clarke Day, and the following activities are included. The art display, reptiles, and invertebrates are housed at the nearby visitor center. Other events are outdoors in a cottonwood riparian setting.

- Guided bird and plant walks
- Free-flying hawk and owl demonstration
- Live reptiles and invertebrates
- Wildlife art display by Ray Harm, nationally known artist and Buenos Aires supporter
- Words of tribute: Dedication of the day
- Native American storytelling
- Keynote speech: Arivaca Cienega Geology and Wildlife: Prehistoric to Present

Event Objectives

- Increase rapport between refuge and community
- Benefit the ecosystem by planting native riparian trees
- Educate the public about riparian habitat and wildlife

Participation

More than 200 local citizens from the small town attended the tree planting. This event has potential for good attendance from Tucson, an hour's drive away. However, despite intensive publicity efforts, media coverage has been inadequate and attendance from Tucson has been low. Those who participated highly commended the events.

A How-to for this Event

Three Months Ahead

- Brainstorm new ideas
- Evaluate previous event to consider what works and what doesn't
- Invite and schedule speakers, live animal presenters, walk leaders, refreshment suppliers

One Month Ahead

- Finalize details and confirm with presenters
- Arrange publicity
- Prepare outdoor signs
- Arrange payment for presenters

Week of Event

- Set up signs and seating outdoors, and tables, animal room and art show indoor

After the Event

- Evaluate the event
- Thank and pay presenters

Tips from the Refuge Staff

- Publicize and advertise! Follow up requests to the media with phone calls and e-mail.
- Recruit help from volunteers and staff. Public events take a lot of work.
- Provide interesting and varied events. Live animals are appealing and attract people of all ages.
- A beautiful outdoor setting attracts attendees and leaves a lasting impression.

Media (Print and Broadcast)

Publicity is the key to a successful event, particularly if the refuge is a distance from urban areas. Local newspapers can feature articles, ads, or calendar listings. Submit

photographs with press releases to attract interest. Follow up with phone calls and e-mail. Post flyers in local areas and at the refuge. Contact schools. Check with radio stations for free public service announcements.

Partner Involvement

Refreshments are provided by the Friends of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge and local citizens. Volunteers assist with setup of signs, tables, and seating.

Budget

The Refuge spends around \$600 per annual event on fees for speakers, walk leaders, and animal presenters, and about \$100 to make signs.

Region 3 Special Event Example

Waterfowl Expo

Detroit Lakes Waterfowl Management District, Minnesota

Event Coordinator
Rick Julian (now at Rydell NWR)

Phone Number
218/847 1381

Event Location
Detroit Lakes WMD,
Detroit Lakes, MN

Date of Event
Late August

Time of Event
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Brief Description of Event

The Expo consists of indoor and outdoor stations with a waterfowl theme, such as duck identification, goose calling, dog work, range estimation, etc.

All stations are open during the event, most are staffed, and cater to both children and adults, waterfowl hunters and non-hunters. The event is held just before waterfowl hunting seasons.

Event Objectives

- Provide fun, educational family waterfowl event on Service site
- Promote proper waterfowl identification and ethical hunting behavior
- Promote informal interaction between Service staff and community members

Participation

Participation depends on location and weather—expect 75-150 people if held at a rural Wetland Management District. Commercially sponsored events in major cities may draw more than 5,000 people.

A How-to for this Event

Set up a series of tables indoors and outdoors, each for a different activity.

Indoor Activities

Station 1

Blue goose tattoos and face painting for children

Station 2

Waterfowl hunting seminars by local experts, if available

Station 3

Refuge or station display

Station 4

Firearms safety display, shotgun patterning display

Outdoor Activities

Station 1

Range estimation contest (a bit of work to set up, but worth the effort – a great one for families). Suspend mounted ducks/geese or decoys from large tethered balloons at different yardages around the grounds (e.g. 15, 30, 50, 65 yards). Also set some near or on the ground at different distances. Set about 6-8 of these stations. List the stations on slips of paper. Participants write their guesses of the distance to each station on the slips of paper. After guesses have been written, give the correct answers. You may need an electronic range finder to determine distances of “flying” critters as the breeze will move them in an out quite a bit. That’s part of the challenge!

Station 2

Duck call demonstration and sample table. Have experts demonstrate different calling techniques, then let participants try their hand at it.

Station 3

Waterfowl identification uses about 12 mounted “ducks on a stick”. Ask people to guess the species and gender.

Station 4

Decoy placement demonstration. Spread decoys out on lawn or adjacent field to show different patterns of placement and decoy types.

Station 5

Retriever demonstrations—another family favorite. Invite a local dog trainer to give demonstrations on training and retrieving, using a nearby field or wetland.

Station 6

Chuckwagon or other food service sponsored by local nonprofit group

Tips from the Waterfowl Management District Staff

This is a great interactive family event which is fun and educational for all ages. With all the activities, people can spend a few hours on the station interacting with staff and volunteers. Cost is minimal; most services and materials are donated. Admission for public should be free or minimal. Even small refuges or Water Management Districts can host this type of event if members of a local Game & Fish Club help staff the stations.

Media (Print and Broadcast)

Promote the event to local print and broadcast media in advance. The Expo lends itself to live radio and TV broadcasts because many of the activities are interactive and involve kids, families, dogs and good, clean fun.

Partner Involvement

This setting opens up more possibilities.

- Offer door prizes donated by local sporting goods stores or bait shops.
- Invite a local game farm to bring some live birds (just for atmosphere).
- Invite a local hardware store or Scout group to sponsor duck box or bird house construction.
- Ask local Rod or Gun club demonstrate shooting and gun safety.
- Have cooking demonstrations.

Budget

Materials/Staff Needed

- Mounted ducks (Ducks on a Stick)
- Waterfowl decoys
- Duck calls
- Rangefinder
- Large helium balloons
- Dogs and handler
- Refreshments/lunch provided by local 4-H Club or Friends Group
- Tattoos/face paints
- Local waterfowl experts

Nearly all materials are either borrowed or donated. Our costs, which run about \$150 - 350, cover large helium balloons and helium, face paints, possible table rental, canopies, etc.

Other Funding Sources

Local Friends group or Chamber of Commerce will often help underwrite this type of activity.

Region 4 Special Event Example

Wheeler Wildlife Celebration

Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Alabama

Event Coordinator
Kathy Whaley,
Supervisory Park Ranger

Phone Number
256/350 6639

Event Location
Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge
Visitor Center

Date of Event
November 30 - December 2, 2001

Time of Event
Student Day November 30th, special
programs and tours for students

General public days
9:00 am to 5:00 pm December 1-2

Brief Description of Event

This three day celebration will offer special programs to focus on the upcoming 100th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the "Big 6" (hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, wildlife photography, interpretation, and environmental education).

The following programs will be offered:

- Guided wetland/waterfowl tours of the White Springs Unit for local high school biology classes and for the public
- Multifaceted hunting and fishing workshops
- Wildlife art display
- Wildlife photography workshop given by a professional wildlife photographer
- Bird identification programs, including field trips
- Live birds of prey programs including a flighted bald eagle
- Snake programs
- Bird mist netting and banding
- guided hikes
- Hands-on nature programs for children
- Refuges 2003 presentation
- Poster board session showing endangered species management on Wheeler's four satellite refuges
- Duck banding demonstration

In addition, a blue goose mascot will be on location Saturday and Sunday as the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Additional Event Activities

- Tours of White Springs Unit led by refuge staff for students (Friday) and the general public
- Hunting workshop to include presenters on archery hunting,

flintlock hunting, game laws, tree stand safety, and hunter techniques

- Fishing workshop to include presenters on fishing techniques, pond stocking, a large tank displaying live specimens, catch and release fishing at the pond for children; shocking boat on display with interpreter
- Wildlife art display and Junior Duck Stamp artwork from 2001 contest
- Wildlife photography workshop
- Waterfowl and bird identification programs and field trips
- Guided refuge tours

Event Objectives

To bring attention to the National Wildlife Refuge System by focusing on the "Big 6", the importance of wetlands, wildlife, and habitat preservation

Participation

2,500-3,000 total participants

A How-to for this Event

June

- Brainstorm for any final ideas, make committee assignments

July

- Make sure all partners and funding are secured

September

- Order all giveaways and other special needs (banners, tents, etc.)

October

- Confirm all speakers and other presenters

November 1

- Have all supplies and needs on hand, secure any "gaps"

Tips from the Refuge Staff

- Build on the community's memory of similar events.
- Have enough assistance to do the event successfully, don't try to do too much.
- Offer activities that are tied directly to the event goal and purpose.
- Aim for quality, not quantity.
- Have a Plan B.
- Be ready for anything that may happen.

Media (Print and Broadcast)*Print*

Decatur Daily
Huntsville Times
Athens News Courier
Hartselle Enquirer
Birmingham News

Broadcast

(Local TV stations in Huntsville)
WHNT Channel 19
WAAY Channel 31
WAFB Channel 48

Partner Involvement

Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association, Tennessee Valley Authority, Flint Creek Watershed Project, Alabama Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries, Tennessee Valley Audubon Society, Morgan County Master Gardeners, Morgan County 4-H Wildlife Club

Budget

\$10,000 (high quality fliers, rental of extra large exhibit tent, pay for busses for local schools, rental vans for refuge tours, supplies, travel for special presenters)

Funding Sources

May be able to secure partial funding from some of the partners

Region 5 Special Event Example

500th NWR

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, West Virginia

Event Coordinator
Janet Marvin

Phone Number
814/789 3585

Event Location
Canaan Valley National Wildlife
Refuge, Davis, WV

Date of Event
October 22, 1994

Time of Event
11:00 am to 3:00 pm

Brief Description of Event

On August 11, 1994 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service purchased land establishing Canaan Valley as the 500th refuge in the National Wildlife Refuge System. This dedication ceremony for America's 500th National Wildlife Refuge included a formal dedication ceremony, exhibits, and music by the Chestnut Ridge Blue Grass band.

Refreshments were served and guests received a commemorative card.

Additional Event Activities

- Scenic chairlift for aerial observation of refuge
- Ground tour of refuge
- Book signing by John Hollingsworth: "Seasons of the Wild—Journey Through Our National Wildlife Refuges" (Book includes a vista of Canaan Valley)
- Singing by Senator Robert C. Byrd

Event Objectives

- Focus on milestone—the 500th National Wildlife Refuge—to promote the importance of the Refuge System to the natural resources of our nation
- Increase awareness that managing land within Canaan Valley as a refuge will maintain ecological diversity of the Valley
- Promote the Refuge to area residents who trace ancestral roots to families that settled in the Valley more than 100 years ago, and to the many seasonal residents that vacation in the Valley

Participation

More than 450 guests

A How-to for this Event

May

- Designate event coordinator
- Site visit
- Check local event schedules

June

- Plan event
- Prepare budget
- Assemble distribution list for invitations
- Invite speakers
- Meet with funding partners

July

- Nail down details about event

August

- Complete all details and confirm speakers
- Contract or schedule event setup needs
- Prepare publicity
- Prepare program
- Confirm support services needs

September

- Site visit
- Select photo opportunity spot
- Meet with contractors on site
- Mail invitations

October

- R5 Strike Team arrives for setup and tear down
- Send thank you letters
- Critique event

Tips from the Refuge Staff

- Start event planning early.
- Keep good records during all phases, from planning to the event.
- A good event requires attention to details.
- Meet early with funding partners.
- Meet on-site with contractors so adjustments can be made, if needed.
- Don't forget to return borrowed items.
- Be sure to thank everyone who had a part in making the event a success.

Media (Print and Broadcast)*Print*

Charlestown Gazette
The Inter-Mountain, Elkins
The Parsons Advocate, Parsons
The Dominion Post, Morgantown

Broadcast

WVPW, Buckhannon
WVWC, Buckhannon
WFBY, Clarksburg
WCHS-TV, Charleston
WOWK-TV, Charleston
WSAZ-TV, Charleston

Community word-of-mouth

Partner Involvement

Guest Services, Inc., Mountain State Expo, The Conservation Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Wildlife Refuge Association, John and Karen Hollingsworth, and G. Dewey Rice, Jr., President, Tucker County Commission

Budget

Total budget for event was \$7,750; approximately \$2,250 was funded from the refuge budget

Funding Sources

Approximately \$5,000 was funded by partners: Guest Services, Inc., The Conservation Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and National Refuge Association

Region 5 Special Event Example

Public Official Day

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, Pennsylvania

Event Coordinator
Gina Blyther Gilliam

Phone Number
610/521 0662 or 215/365 3118

Event Location
John Heinz National Wildlife
Refuge at Tinicum, Philadelphia, PA

Date of Event
The last Friday in September

Time of Event
10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Brief Description of Event

Since 1999, the Refuge has hosted this event which includes presentations by staff, volunteers and Friends group members, video or slide show, tour of the Cusano Environmental Education Center and a van tour of the Refuge. The event is timed to take advantage of migration and the open calendars of public officials. During this time of the year, public officials are fresh from summer recess and have not begun active campaigning if they are running for office.

Additional Event Activities

Public officials enjoy observing students and teachers using the Refuge as an outdoor classroom. Make sure school groups are scheduled to visit the Refuge on Public Official Day.

Event Objectives

- Promote the Refuge and strengthen the partnership between the Refuge and local, state and federal public officials
- Increase public officials' awareness of the mission of the Refuge, and the Refuge's connection to their constituents
- Enhance Refuge outreach efforts by exposing new audiences (public officials and their constituents) to the Refuge

Participation

More than half of the public officials invited usually participate in this event.

A How-to For this Event

July

- Call the offices of all local, state and Federal public officials that represent the district your field station is located.
- Confirm the spelling of each public official's name, address and telephone/fax number.

- Request the name of the scheduling secretary.
- Find out when important regular council and township meetings are held to avoid scheduling conflicts.
- Confirm the availability of others who will be involved (Friends group, FWS staff, volunteers, etc.) in the event.

August

- Send a media advisory to alert media that this event will be taking place next month.
- Mail letters of invitation to the public officials. Remember to invite candidates of all parties who are running for office.
- The letter should include a little information about your field station and any strong partnerships with the local community. Emphasize that after the event, public officials will be able to better serve constituents by informing them about the great natural resource located in their own backyards.
- The letter should include a RSVP deadline that is a week before the event. Include an agenda with the letter and cc the scheduling secretary.

September

- If a public official cannot attend, request that a representative be selected to attend the event.
- If responses are not received by the RSVP date, fax the letter and agenda to the scheduling secretaries. Follow up with a phone call.

Three Days Before Event

- Confirm the attendance of public officials—don't be surprised if you're asked to send the letter and agenda again!

Two Days Before Event

- Compile packets of information (use one of the FWS folders) for each public official. Include brochures, newsletters, recent newspaper articles and FWS items (pencils, bookmarks and coloring books).

Day Before Event

- Make additional copies of the agenda.
- Type up a sign-in sheet.
- Purchase donuts, fruit, bagels, cream cheese, tea, coffee, orange and apple juice.

Day of Event

- Introduce Friends group members and volunteers to each public official. Make sure they make a connection. This can be very beneficial in the long run!
- Start and—more importantly—end on time!

Two Days After Event

- Send thank you letters to everyone who attended the event. In the letter, request that they spread the word about the programs and opportunities at your refuge.
- Debrief with refuge staff, volunteers and Friends group. Brainstorm ways to improve next year's event.

Tips From the Refuge Staff

- Visit or call each public official at least once during the year. When visiting, take brochures and request that they be displayed in the office and distributed to constituents. Offer to give a slide or video presentation during a community workshop.
- Involve your Friends group and volunteers as much as possible.
- Public Officials have very tight schedules. It is very important

that you end on time. Usually, the public officials like to chat with each other before the start of the event. Remember that the event gives them the opportunity to connect with counterparts and other representatives from different areas.

- Your Refuge Manager should give a five-minute welcome at the beginning of the event.
- Recruit a volunteer to photograph or videotape the event.

Media (Print and Broadcast)

- Make follow-up phone calls to media before the event.
- Focus on the community/constituent benefits of the event. The media is not always interested in covering events attended by public officials.
- Send press releases to newspapers with a photo from the event.
- Ask public officials to provide names of media contacts to get expanded coverage.
- Request that the public officials include information about the refuge and their participation in the event in their constituents' newsletter.

Partner Involvement

The Refuge has a dedicated Friends and volunteer group. It is very important to keep them involved.

Budget

Plan to spend approximately \$150-200 for items such as name tags, magic markers, cotton table cloths, paper products. FWS funds cannot be used for food for this event. Refreshments cost about \$3-\$5 per public official. The Friends Group or volunteers may be able to help by donating money or food for the event.

Region 6 Special Event Example

International Migratory Bird Day Banner Project

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, Utah

Event Coordinators

Ann Bull: logistical, scheduling, resource, and implementation coordinator

Karen Lindsey: presentations and implementation

Vicki Roy: presentations and implementation

Phone Number

435/723 5887

Event Location

Brigham City, UT

Date of Event

Week of International Migratory Bird Day

Time of Event

Week-long celebration of International Migratory Bird Day

Banner Vendor for this Event

Goodson Banner, Salt Lake City, Utah 801 / 544 2374

Brief Description of Event

Since 1993, elementary grade students in the local school districts have submitted drawings of migratory songbirds, shorebirds, or waterbirds to decorate banners for International Migratory Bird Day. Eighty-four selections are randomly chosen from the entries. The young artists attend a party at the Refuge to draw a larger version of their drawing to insert into the clear sleeves of the banners. These double-sided, vinyl banners are hung on the 42 lamp posts along Main Street in Brigham City, Utah for International Migratory Bird Day.

Event Objectives

- Increase awareness of local bird resources and their value to the community
- Create interest and enthusiasm about birds in the community, especially among young people
- Encourage community cohesion, pride, and celebration
- Increase awareness of the status and needs of birds
- Create economic incentives for businesses to support bird conservation
- Promote the Refuge as an integral part of the community
- The point of the project is to teach the students and the community about birds, not to run a typical coloring contest

Participation

Two hundred to 1,000 school children participate in this event, depending on the enthusiasm of the art teachers at the schools

A How-to for this Event

January

- Order supplies
- Initiate fund-raising and/or requesting donations
- Send announcements to local paper(s)
- Make entry forms; print contest rules on the back

February and March

- Make presentations to schools and community groups
- Distribute entry forms to students through teachers

April

- Accept entries
- Make arrangements for the drawing party in early May

Early May

- Refuge staff randomly selects drawings
- Notify artists by postcard through the mail. Each person chosen must call the Refuge to confirm that they will attend the drawing party. If they do not call, another person is given the opportunity to participate.

May

- Host drawing party at the Refuge
- During the week of International Migratory Bird Day, the banners are hung by the City and stay up for about two to three weeks.
- After the banners are taken down, the children retrieve them at the refuge. Most of the kids want them back to hang at home.

Tips from the Refuge Staff

About Approaching and Working with the City and Local Businesses

- Find out if your city will cooperate with your project. Then figure out the type and size of poles the banners will be hung on, and order the banners (Information on banners is at the end of this write-up).
- One of the major goals was to make this a community-sponsored activity. Involve different groups and local businesses by working with them for donations.
- Shopping malls can sometimes hang banners.
- Local businesses can also use the banners and/or drawings in their store fronts.

About Approaching and Working with the Schools

- Attend a school principal's coordination meeting early in the year to get the word out to the schools about this project. Remember that teachers also have very limited time and specific curriculums they must teach. Try to make your project as adaptable to their needs and curriculum as possible.
- You may want to restrict the project to specific grades or schools, or to focus on different groups of birds each year.
- Put enough time, energy, and practice into the presentation to make it age-appropriate, entertaining, and educational.

About the Contest and Making the Selections

- Contest rules are printed on the back of the entry form. All drawing must be done freehand—no projectors, overheads, parents, etc.
- Limit the choice of birds so students must pick some of the less common birds.
- Choose a representative group of artists based on the number of entries from each grade and school.
- Save a few spaces for kids with special abilities and remember to encourage their teachers and parents to have them enter.

About the Banners, the Drawing Materials, and the Drawing Party

- Use high-quality materials and production on this project. Shabby looking banners do not lend credibility to your message.
- Permanent, non-washable markers are a must! The banners are exposed to the elements. These can be difficult to find but can be ordered in sets from school supply catalogs. Because of the heavy use, have plenty of extras.
- Have lots of permanent brown markers, a critical color for drawing birds.
- Have plenty of pencils, erasers, and pencil sharpeners for the kids to sketch their designs before coloring them.
- Allow an extra week before hanging banners to make sure they are in good repair.

- Use the drawing party as an opportunity for some fun activities and education for the artist's parents and siblings. Remember to include refreshments, decorations, and entertainment.
- During the party, walk around and encourage the kids to "make it big" and "use lots of color".

Some Notes About the School Presentations

- Use a lot of good quality bird pictures in your slide program.
- The theme of the school presentation is "How are birds different?" Ask the kids to look at beaks and feet to figure out where the bird lives and what it eats. Talk about habitat needs, migration, and threats to birds.
- Bring along a box of field guides and use slides of birds to teach them how to identify birds using the field guides.
- Ask the kids to decide if they think birds are important. Tell them that learning about birds and what birds need to survive is the most important thing they can do to help them.
- The second most important thing is to teach other people about birds and to tell them that you think they are important.
- The final point of the talk is to pitch the banner project as a way for kids to help teach the whole community about birds by hanging banners on the main street for IMBD.

Some Other Great Ideas

- Make a long banner to hang across the main street. Invite the public to come and draw a bird on the banner. Also a great way to involve the kids who did not get picked and younger children.
- Each participant gets an IMBD tee shirt. The shirts can be obtained through your refuge support group, cooperative association, and/or donations.
- Draw names from each age group and hand out Field Guides.
- Hold a random drawing to distribute items donated by local businesses.

Sample Schedule

March 1 - 31

Schedule slide talks with schools

March 21 - April 22

Distribute entry forms; give slide programs to schools

April 22

Entry forms due

April 25

Select and notify winners

May 6

Banner Day party (kids paint banners)

May 12

Banners hung by Brigham City staff

May 13

International Migratory Bird Day

Media (Print and Broadcast)

- Articles in the local paper recognize donations from various businesses before banners are hung
- Reminders about the entry deadline are also posted in the local paper

Partner Involvement

Local businesses are asked for donations. This has been a great way to involve the community.

Budget

The Refuge sets aside \$500 (or more) for this event.

Region 6 Special Event Example

Eagle Day

Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, South Dakota

Event Coordinator
Beth Ullenberg

Phone Number
605 /885 6320

Event Location
Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge,
Columbia, SD

Date of Event
Last Sunday of March

Time of Event
12:00 pm to 5 pm

Brief Description of Event

Since 1990, the Refuge has hosted this event which includes live presentations about eagles and other raptors, guided tours of the Refuge on rented buses, and outdoor displays and activities for visitors of all ages, especially young ones. This event is timed to take advantage of the peak migration of snow geese and bald eagles through this area.

Additional Event Activities

- Poster contest for kids in grades 1-3
- Make your own bookmark
- Build your own birdhouse
- Bird banding demonstration
- Info about birdhouses and bird feeders
- Live birds of prey available for close-up views

Event Objectives

- Increase awareness of migratory birds and their needs
- Create interest and enthusiasm about birds in the community, especially among young people
- Promote the Refuge as an integral part of the community.

Participation

An average of 800–1,200 visitors, depending on the weather

A How-to for this Event

November

- Brainstorm for new ideas
- Evaluate previous event to consider what works and what doesn't
- Invite and schedule speakers

January and February

- Nail down details about the event

March

- Complete all details and speaker confirmations

Last Sunday in March

- Eagle Day at Sand Lake NWR

April

- Evaluate the event during a wrap-up meeting
- Organize and return the posters to the participating schools

Tips from the Refuge Staff

- Build on the community's memory—schedule your event on a specific day year after year.
- Only do what you can handle; have enough staff and volunteers to work the event.
- Quality counts—offer only good activities rather than a lot of unfocused activities.
- People with whom you already have working relationships are more likely to donate their time and services for these types of events.

Media (Print and Broadcast)

- Community word-of-mouth; this event celebrated its 10th year in 2000.
- The Aberdeen, South Dakota, Convention and Visitors Bureau provides a lot of general advertising for the Refuge. The Bureau also provides informational flyers about the Eagle Day event for posting in the local communities.
- The Refuge sends out news releases and brochures about Eagle Day.

Partner Involvement

The Refuge has a dedicated corps of volunteers to work all aspects of this event.

Budget

The Refuge sets aside \$1,400 for this event to cover bus rental, gas money for speakers, and any additional costs.

Other Funding Sources

The money from a donation box at the Refuge is used to help fund this event; a special fund is set up at the Regional Office to retain this money until needed.

Region 7 Special Event Example

National Wildlife Refuge Celebration

Arctic, Kanuti & Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, Alaska

Event Coordinator
Tom Edgerton

Phone Number
907/456 0250

Event Location
Bentley Mall, Fairbanks, Alaska

Date of Event
The weekend following National
Wildlife Refuge Week

Time of Event
Saturday 10:00 am to 7:00 pm
Sunday 11:00 am to 6:00 pm

Theme of Event
Wildlife First or
NWRs: For Wildlife, Habitat and
People

Brief Description of Event

Annually since 1996, Service employees have invited Fairbanks residents to this family-oriented event celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week. People of all ages learn about wildlife/habitats, their local refuges and the Refuge System through a wide variety of activities. Each year, more than 30 Service employees (most from Refuges, but also from Fisheries and Ecological Services) and 20 volunteers (artists, bird handlers and employee relatives) help with this event at the largest mall in Fairbanks.

Activities Held at the Event

These change a bit year to year.

- **Arts/Crafts:** students make wildlife “stained-glass window” art or create a refuge using various materials
- **Magic Shows:** twice a day, a local magician performs, incorporating messages about refuges and the Refuge System into everything he does
- **Demonstrations:** employees show field gear and equipment and talk about their work, e.g. telemetry, plant identification, bird banding, fish tagging
- **Tattoos:** staff apply washable blue goose tattoos to people and tell them what the symbol means
- **Computers:** people solve interactive puzzles of refuge scenes, do a wildlife census, and locate refuges on map of Alaska
- **Live Birds:** bird handlers show/tell people about live falcons and ravens
- **Junior Duck Stamp Contest:** local artists and staff help students create art to enter in the contest
- **Volunteer Drawing:** people enter to win a chance to volunteer at a refuge
- **Baked Alaska Critters Contest:** local bakers make something that looks like a fish or wildlife

species; the creations are judged, displayed and auctioned; proceeds go to a local charity

- **Wildlife/Wildlands Photography Contest:** the Service sponsors this community-wide contest; entries are judged and winners are displayed on portable exhibits at the mall
- **The King Fisher:** people try their hand at this realistic fishing simulator
- **FWS Booth:** employees provide information and assistance to visitors. Staff give away posters, brochures, balloons, and other free items.
- **Face Painting:** staff paint people’s faces to look like wildlife species
- **Treasure Hunt:** students participate in an Information Treasure Hunt to earn a Junior Refuge Manager badge from a Teddy Roosevelt stand-in
- **Video:** people watch the 11-minute Refuge System video
- **Employee Interaction:** staff roam through the crowds, helping people; some use wildlife hand puppets to engage children and families

Event Objectives

- More effectively reach a higher percentage of those who know little or nothing about the Service, the Refuge System and their local refuges
- Convey messages about the Service, the Refuge System and local refuges
- Involve employees from all programs in outreach, energizing and uniting them to better understand and work for the Refuge System mission
- Promote Service employees as an integral part of the Fairbanks community

- Make use of a community gathering (shoppers at a mall) to do outreach
- Offer activities that are fun and convenient for people to participate in
- Touch people positively with upbeat activities and enthusiastic staff

Participation

The event draws between 3,500 and 6,000 people annually, including many repeats from previous years. Portions of the event are broadcast live on local radio stations, reaching many thousands more.

Tips on Planning and Conducting the Event

This is a very labor intensive but worthwhile educational and public relations event. It requires a high degree of management and employee commitment.

Before the Event

- Book the space with the mall manager as soon as possible!
- Begin weekly planning meetings no later than early August. The event takes several weeks of full-time work by the coordinator and many days by other staff.
- Make sure one staff person is responsible for preparing each activity.
- Invite staff from the Regional Office and other refuges to help.
- Have staff sign up for two-hour blocks of time.
- Plan for giveaway items to thank partners, award contest winners, and provide to radio stations to use as promotional items.
- Produce activity signs on a computer and mount them on foam-core board for a professional appearance.
- Hold a pizza luncheon the week before the event to brief employees and show them how to staff the activities.
- Evaluate the event yearly. Make changes/improvements as needed and to keep the event from becoming routine.

At the Event

- Make sure all staff have/wear uniforms and name tags.

- Use backdrop exhibits (to display signs, maps, art, etc.) at each station.
- Drape skirting around the tables for a professional appearance.
- Photograph the event and record the level of participation.
- Develop entry forms and award certificates for the contests.
- At the Junior Duck Stamp Contest activity, provide live-mounts or realistic decoys as examples for the artists.
- Use a tabletop exhibit at each entrance to welcome people, post activity flyers, display refuge week poster, fly blue goose, etc.
- Have fun (it won't be hard)!

After the Event

- Publish a note in the local newspaper thanking your partners and the public for supporting the event.
- Send thank-you letters to partners.
- Thank all Service staff that helped with the event.
- Write a detailed event summary, budget and evaluation.

Other Ideas

- Invite mall stores to become part of the celebration; encourage them to provide discounts on nature-related items, conduct a "migration activity" from store to store, stamp contest entry forms, dress up, etc.
- Work with local mayors to issue proclamations "Celebrating NWRs."

Promotion/Advertisement

Not all are done every year.

- PSAs are sent to the local newspaper and television stations. An ad is run in the newspaper on the Sunday and Wednesday before the event.
- Taped radio ads are aired on local radio stations beginning 3-5 days before the event; disc jockeys also plug the event live.
- Live 3-4 hour broadcasts are conducted with several radio stations during the event; the broadcasts focus on interviews with Service employees.

- Promotional spots for the event are aired on local television stations.
- A 37' banner advertising the event is hung over a major Fairbanks street for two weeks before the event. During the event, banners are hung over main entrances to the mall, inviting people to "Celebrate NWRs."
- All the schools and PTAs receive invitations to the event. Invitations also are sent to selected individuals, groups and the media.
- Event flyers are posted at the local Public Lands Information Center, the local university and other public facilities.
- Refuge managers participate in talk shows on local radio stations.
- Self-standing signs advertising the event are set up at road intersections.

Partner Involvement

The Service recruits volunteers with particular skills to work with employees in conducting the event: a local bird rehabilitator; three falconers and up to five wildlife artists. A talented magician is hired for the magic shows. Professional bakers are asked to donate something for the baking contest; local celebrities and media personnel are recruited to judge it. Photographers, artists and students are recruited to judge the photography contest. Mall staff hang banners, set up tables and provide other necessary support.

Note:

Although staff should recruit outside help and support for this event (including funding), this is, first and foremost, a Service event to be held by Service employees. Show the colors!

Budget

The three Refuges budget at least \$10,000 annually for this event. The money is used for radio and newspaper ads, balloons and supplies, art materials, production/hanging of banners, shipping of exhibits, magic shows, animal costumes/puppets, skirting, signs, giveaways and many other items.

Centennial Time Capsules Project

Purpose

- To preserve a view of your Refuge for the year 2103
- To celebrate the Centennial year of the National Wildlife Refuge System
- To participate in a nationwide event on March 14, 2003. All time capsule celebrations will be coordinated for a simultaneous nationwide media event

Participation

- All staffed Refuges are required to do their own time capsule and participate in the nationwide event on March 14, 2003
- A time capsule focused on the entire National Wildlife Refuge System may be buried at Pelican Island to provide the birthday focus for this nationwide event

Recommended Process

Following is an outline of the project's major phases. This outline also serves as a table of contents for this chapter. Narratives are included with each phase.

1. *Determine Your Approach/Scope of Project*
2. *Select and Archive Your Time Capsule Items*
3. *Determine the Type and Size of Your Time Capsule*
4. *Record and Register Your Time Capsule*
5. *Prepare Your Time Capsule for Burial or Placement*
6. *Plan Your Time Capsule Event*

Appendix A. Time Capsule and Archival Materials Vendors List

Additional Resources

For more information about planning time capsule projects, time capsule and archival information and sources, check out these Web sites: <http://www.oglethorpe.edu/itcs/>

<http://www.simsc.si.edu/cal/timecaps.html>

1. Determine Your Approach / Scope of Project

What should your time capsule contain? Here are some possible approaches.

- A snapshot of only the year 2003 at the refuge—photos of staff and station with an identification key; some challenges, etc.
- A history of the refuge—selection of narrative reports, wildlife and habitat management plans, etc.
- The role of the refuge in the local community—records and/or narratives on how the local community views and uses the refuge; a current map of the community and a map of the community from 100 years ago; landscape photos of the community, etc
- A combination of one or more of the above approaches

The approach will determine:

1. the capsule's size,
2. what you will need to do to collect and properly archive documents and other mementos,
3. the cost for the entire project.

Other questions to consider:

1. Will you ask anyone else to contribute?
2. What are the contribution parameters?

Establish Project Coordinators at the Station Level

Select one person to be the project manager for your station's time capsule project. The project manager will:

- serve as the primary point of contact for the station for this project.
- work with the refuge manager and other staff to determine the

approach for their station's time capsule.

- work with the refuge manager and other staff to decide where to bury or locate the capsule.
- coordinate collection and archival of the items.
- coordinate the purchase of the capsule and other related items.
- coordinate the preparation of the burial site or location.
- coordinate the schedule for sealing the capsule with the time capsule vendor, if needed.
- develop and coordinate the celebration event with the local community and with the Regional Time Capsule Project Coordinator or Coordination Team.

Coordination at the Regional and National Levels

Coordinators will be selected at the national and regional levels; at these levels, the coordination may be a team effort.

The team may consist of the Regional Archaeologist, the Region's Centennial Team representative or proxy, a field representative, a contracting specialist, and others whose skills will be necessary to help stations complete this project successfully.

The Regional Time Capsule Team members will provide their specific skills to help stations accomplish this project. For example:

- The Regional Archaeologist would help a station determine approach and items to include. The Regional Archaeologist may also be the regional record keeper for locations of the time capsules, coordinating with the keeper of the national time capsule location record and with regional property records.

- The Centennial Team representative would facilitate coordination among the region's refuges to share ideas. This person would also help coordinate the region's projects so all stations in the region will be ready to participate in the nationwide media event.
- An Engineering representative could help determine the best locations and methods for burying capsules.

Coordination at the national level will most likely mirror the regional coordination.

2. Select and Archive Your Time Capsule Items

Potential Items

Gather items which best represent the station at a personal level. It may help to ask the refuge staff these questions. You may also want to ask the local community similar questions.

1. Which items represent the refuge to the staff personally?
2. Which items represent the daily routine at the refuge?
3. Which items represent the annual management practices of the refuge?

Use this partial list to get ideas about the types of items you may want to include in your time capsule.

- Map(s) of the refuge and/or local community
- Photos of the refuge, keyed to the map listed above
- Records and/or mementos of special events
- Refuge brochures
- Badges
- Service uniform(s)
- Common tools in present-day wildlife and/or habitat management such as bird bands, field note books, and other related materials
- Flags
- Blueprints of facilities
- Volunteer/Friends list
- Phone number list, business cards, phone call log
- Visitor logs

- Executive Order or legislation that established the Refuge
- A selection of annual narratives
- Drawings/essays by school children (e.g. local school district wildlife poster/essay contest)
- Newspaper articles about the Refuge and/or its natural resource issues
- Forecasts of what life will be like in 2103 from school children, educators, businessmen, council members, influential people in the community

Selection Precautions

Following is a partial list of precautions you need to take in selecting items for your time capsule. Additional information may be supplied with your time capsule and/or archival materials.

- Digital records are not recommended unless you also include the playback instrument—technology and power sources may become obsolete
- Paper copies must be of the highest archival quality
- Select black and white photos rather than color photos
- Rubber and wood items are not recommended, or should be encased; they give off gases that may affect other items
- Animal or plant specimens should be sterilized and packaged separately in their own archival container
- Enclose each item in an archival-quality envelope, folder, or other container, and/or wrap in acid-free tissue. Each photo should be in its own archival sleeve
- Label all items using an archival pencil or pen
- Include a list of items in the container

Archiving Your Items

Field stations will be responsible for obtaining necessary archival supplies.

Appendix A includes a list time capsule vendors who offer archiving services at an additional cost. These vendors will receive and archive your items, and seal the capsule for you. Some of the time capsule vendors offer sealing services which preclude the need to archive the

items. The sealing service for the capsule can involve these methods.

1. Including conservation-level silica gel to help maintain low humidity
2. Replacing oxygen with an inert gas (argon or nitrogen)
3. Sealing by screw-top with a gasket or welding (without burning interior contents)

3. Determine the Type and Size of Your Time Capsule

Field stations will be responsible for obtaining their time capsules and the archival materials needed to protect their items.

Types of Time Capsules

A key point to keep in mind when selecting a time capsule and planning for its burial or placement is that moisture is the primary culprit in destroying a capsule and its contents. Time capsules come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and materials. Each type of capsule has its good and bad points. Appendix A provides some specifications to consider in your selection.

Determining the Size of Your Time Capsule

- Gather all known and potential items.
- Place items in a box.
- Measure the volume of this box to determine which size capsule you'll need.
- Use Appendix A to investigate which vendor can supply you with the appropriate capsule and other services you may need.

4. Record and Register Your Time Capsule

Field stations will need to record their time capsule and keep a copy of the record for retrieval in 2103.

- Include a complete list of items in your time capsule and in your registry records. Describe the color and material of each item.
- Note the location of the time capsule with GPS.
- Forward a copy of your record and GPS location to the Regional Coordination Team.

- Register your time capsule with the International Time Capsule Society at <http://www.oglethorpe.edu/itcs/> Include the itemized description record and GPS location of your time capsule in your registry.
- Keep a record of your registry at your station and provide a copy to the Regional Coordination Team.

5. Prepare Your Time Capsule for Burial or Placement

Sealing the capsule and its location are important steps to preserving the contents for the future. A time capsule does not necessarily need to be buried. It can be stored in a cornerstone or other cement/masonry structure. If buried, a burial vault is recommended as an additional moisture barrier. Be sure to mark the location with a plaque that commemorates the event and future opening on March 14, 2103.

Labeling the Time Capsule

All NWRs Centennial time capsules will need to be labelled on the exterior of the capsule. The label can be engraved directly on the outside of any metal time capsule. Some vendors provide this service (at an extra cost) but you may want to take your capsule to a local engraver.

Use this language on the label:
 “National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Time Capsule for (Your Refuge Name) National Wildlife Refuge
 Committed on March 14, 2003
 To be opened on March 14, 2103
 If found before March 14, 2103, please return to the United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service.”

6. Plan Your Time Capsule Event

The goal is to have a coordinated, nationwide media event on March 14, 2003 that would highlight the NWRs Centennial. Details will be forthcoming, but for planning purposes, please review the Special Events section of this handbook.

Appendix A Vendor List for Time Capsules and Archival Materials

I. Time Capsule Vendors

These vendors responded to the call for information. Other vendors may exist but have not yet posted information on the Web.

BarrTek

2885 Whipporwill Drive
 Morgan Hill, CA 95037
 phone 408/779 2345
 contact Gillian Barr
<http://www.barrtek.com>

- Cylindrical capsules only; all capsules 12” in diameter; available in 12”, 24”, and 36” lengths
- Metal capsules
- Archiving materials: none
- Archiving services: their method of preservation (part of their sealing process) negates the need for archival supplies
- Sealing method: nitrile seal with lid and capsule drilled for screws
- Sealing service: lid secured by screws; take capsule to local gas supplier to have inert gas pumped into capsule to displace oxygen
- Labeling service: engraving service at extra cost
- Shipping/handling: separate cost

FuturePak

1580 W. San Bernardino Road #C
 Covina, CA 91722
 phone 626/966 1955
 contact Janet Reinhold
<http://futurepkg.home.mindspring.com>

- Range of shapes and sizes
- Most models are metal capsules, both rectangular and cylindrical; other materials available
- Archiving materials: see following list
- Archiving services: in-house service; additional cost
- Sealing method: final weld and conditioning of air inside capsule.
- Sealing service: included with certain models
- Labeling service: additional cost; logos added at additional cost
- Shipping/handling: separate cost

Time Capsules, Inc.

107 Bauder School Road
 Prospect, PA 16052
 phone 800/527 7853
 contact Tom Marak
<http://burgh.com/business/capsules>

- All capsules custom-made; rectangular shape
- Metal capsules; container within a container
- Archiving materials: none
- Archiving services: their method of preservation negates the need for archival supplies and/or preparation
- Sealing method: patented vapor phase deacidification process, can be done by refuge staff or by vendor at separate cost
- Sealing service: separate cost
- Labeling service: additional cost
- Shipping/handling: separate cost

II. Archival Materials Vendors

Access the websites for complete list of archival materials/products. This list may be incomplete. Other vendors may exist but have not yet posted information on the Web and/or have not responded to the call for information.

Archival Products

PO Box 1413
 Des Moines, IA 50305-1413
 phone 800/526 5640
<http://www.archival.com>

FuturePak

1580 W. San Bernardino Road #C
 Covina, CA 91722
 phone 626/966 1955
 contact Janet Reinhold
<http://futurepkg.home.mindspring.com>

Light Impressions

<http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com>