



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

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Employee Input Reflected in Regional Restructuring

Following an extensive review of the regional organizational structure, the Service Directorate decided in April to make several important changes to simplify Service organization and continue moving forward in improving ecosystem conservation and program integrity.

Director Clark announced on June 9 that the Washington office realignment received final clearance from both the House and the Senate. It became effective July 2, the same date as the regional office reorganization.

The Regional Office changes will:

- eliminate the geographic assistant regional director (GARD) and programmatic assistant regional director (PARD) positions in regional offices, instead creating assistant regional director (ARD) positions responsible for both program policy and line management;
- align program supervisors and other staff under the appropriate ARD;
- establish a special assistant for ecosystems reporting to each regional director;
- strengthen focus on national wildlife refuges by establishing regional chiefs for the National Wildlife Refuge System and a Directorate-level position; and
- restructure the Federal Aid and Migratory Bird functions by establishing assistant regional directors for Migratory Birds and State Programs.

The decision comes after an examination undertaken by deputy assistant directors and deputy regional directors, who gathered input from more than 500 Service employees regarding the ecosystem approach and the PARD/GARD structure (see “How the Review Was Conducted”).

The Deputies Team found that while Service employees “clearly...support the ecosystem approach,” they find the PARD/GARD organization “complex...and do not feel it adds to accomplishment of the Service’s mission.”

Ecosystem teams will continue to work toward implementing the ecosystem approach throughout the Service, the Directorate said.

Rachel F. Levin, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

What Will the Special Assistants Do?

The Directorate established seven special assistants positions to coordinate the ecosystem approach for each region. Each special assistant will report to his or her regional director and will provide liaison with ARDs, program supervisors and other regional office staff.

The special assistants will facilitate ecosystem team management and serve as advocates and managers of ecosystem team priorities in their regions. They will also facilitate communication and coordination between ecosystem teams within their regions, and work with Service partners such as other agencies, non-government organizations, and tribes, to achieve ecosystem goals.

Special assistants have already been named in the following regions:

Region 2 — Charlie Sanchez
Region 3 — Rollie Siegfried
Region 4 — Mike Gantt
Region 7 — Tony Degange

The other 3 regions have advertised the special assistant positions.

Rachel F. Levin

How the Review Was Conducted

The Deputies Team surveyed employees at all levels of the Service through a voluntary focus group process, using an anonymous survey to gather quantitative data and conducting in-depth interviews.

During the focus groups, facilitators used a “groupware” computer software system—allowing all answers to remain anonymous throughout the sessions—to collect votes on the response to the question, “What’s working effectively with the GARD/PARD structure as it relates to the ecosystem approach implementation and programmatic effectiveness of the Service?”

Respondents provided comments that identified positive results of the current management structure. Participants responded to each of the items listed by registering “yes” if they agreed, “no” if they disagreed with the statement, “don’t know” if they did not have an opinion about that item or “NA” (not applicable).

New Washington Office Assignments

Dan Ashe —Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System (including divisions of Refuges and Realty)

Tom Melius—Assistant Director, Migratory Birds and State Programs (including Division of Federal Aid, Office of Migratory Bird Management, North American Waterfowl and Wetlands office, Duck Stamp office and Conservation Partnerships Liaison office)

Gary Frazer—Assistant Director, Endangered Species

Cathy Short—Assistant Director, Fisheries and Habitat Conservation (including Division of Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance, Division of National Fish Hatcheries, Division of Habitat Conservation and Division of Environmental Contaminants)

Mike Smith is serving as acting Assistant Director for External Affairs while the Service pursues recruitment for that position.

Gone Fishin': John Rogers Retires after Long and Varied Career with Service

Making further use of computer technology, members of the focus group anonymously responded to a 24-item survey developed by the National Ecosystem Approach Implementation Team.

In addition to this survey, each focus group was given the opportunity to add issues which individual group members believed affected ecosystem implementation or overall program effectiveness of the Service that were not addressed in the survey. Respondents registered their agreement or disagreement with each issue as before.

Following the implementation team survey, participants selected their top three issues from among all they had identified—including those added by group members. The groups discussed these top three issues, and responded to the question, "What does this issue mean to you?" The focus group generated recommendations on solving the issues; each recommendation was also captured though the groupware system.

Finally, focus group participants had the opportunity to vote on each of the proposed solutions to determine their level of agreement on each solution proposed. Each participant was able to offer a final comment or recommendation in response to the question, "If there was one thing, if anything you could do to improve ecosystem approach implementation or overall programmatic effectiveness of the Service it would be..." Verbatim comments were recorded using the groupware software.

All data collected during the focus group session were made available to the deputies unedited and in their entirety. Additionally, members of the deputies group attended each of the focus group sessions to see and hear first hand the comments from the participants and ask clarifying questions to make sure each point made was understood as it was intended. Results of the focus group interviews are summarized in the Deputies Report on the Service's Internal Internet at <http://sii2.fws.gov/r9extaff/new/19deputies.pdf>.

Rachel F. Levin, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC



Fitting tribute. *Parting is such sweet sorrow... unless you get a big party and neat gifts like this fishing reel.* FWS photo: Rachel F. Levin.

Deputy Director John Rogers retired in May after a career that spanned three decades, multiple regions and numerous watershed events in conservation, and included a firm belief in the importance of agency research.

Most recently he led the National Ecosystem Approach Implementation team, which advised the Directorate on implementing the ecosystem approach.

Rogers got his start with the Service when the agency still had a research arm, and during recent conversations he recalled fondly the days he spent doing research.

"The one thing I always wanted to do was work in research for the Fish and Wildlife Service," he said.

After getting his doctorate at North Carolina State University, Rogers went to work at the Monell Chemical Services Center in Philadelphia, and later moved to Washington, D.C., to work in the Service's Division of Wildlife Research.

He then went to the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland, where he managed migratory bird and endangered species research. There, Rogers oversaw some of the earliest research in restoration efforts for the endangered California condor and Puerto Rican parrot, and he also worked with early gray wolf recovery issues. He was also involved in early work to place the annual setting of migratory harvest regulations on a sounder scientific basis.

After making his mark on the research program at Patuxent, Rogers came back to Washington, D.C., to help avert a crisis and save the cooperative research units from being abolished. He savored the satisfaction of his role in preserving that research function in the Service—for the time being.

"I feel great about being part of that effort," he said. "The research in natural resources that the Fish and Wildlife Service developed was the finest fish and wildlife research arm in the country, if not the world."

After stints as chief of the Division of Environmental Contaminants and deputy assistant director for Refuges and Wildlife in Washington, D.C., Rogers became deputy regional director in Alaska, an experience punctuated by the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. Rogers called his time in Alaska "one of the greatest assignments I had in my career" as he became a key Service figure in the coordinating wildlife cleanup after the spill.

continued on page 4

On the Cover:

Desert bighorn sheep. Taken by Lynn Starnes, this was one of numerous Service entries into the Interior Department's National Photo contest. Turn to page 17 for more Service photo contest entries, as well as three award-winning poems.

Gone Fishin': John Rogers Retires after Long and Varied Career with Service (continued)

Part of his job, he recalled, was trying to get Exxon to "stand up and shoulder their responsibility" for the spill. Rogers said that despite the massive cleanup effort, the effects of the spill are still felt today.

"The biological, sociological and economic impact of the Exxon Valdez spill rolls on," he said.

Rogers went from the controversy of post-Exxon Valdez Alaska to a five-month stint as acting regional director in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

"I enjoyed the Great Lakes and Big Rivers region," he said of his time in Region 3, "and I learned a lot from the experience and the people."

From the Midwest, Rogers headed to the Southwest and more controversy as he became regional director for the Southwest at a time when the region was becoming heavily involved with several controversial endangered species issues, including the listing and designation of critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl and the Rio Grande silvery minnow.

At that time, designating critical habitat for endangered species was not something the Service frequently did. Rogers and the staff in Region 2 faced a challenge in making the public understand why it was necessary, but in the end he said, the effort paid off.

Rogers returned to Washington, D.C., in 1995 as Service deputy director. He soon found himself in a role he never imagined when he took over the helm of the Service as acting director during Mollie Beattie's struggle with brain cancer.

"Being acting director was nothing I ever wanted," Rogers said. "[But] I got a greater and broader and deeper appreciation for the agency, what it does and the employees we depend on."

Rogers served as acting director until 1997 when President Clinton appointed Jamie Rappaport Clark as Director. Returning to his role as deputy, Rogers focused his efforts on several special projects. He has worked hard to ensure the Service achieves

and maintains diversity in its workforce, something, he emphasized, that is not just a legal mandate and a social responsibility but, "if we don't reflect the diversity of views, racial, cultural, gender mix of the communities we are in, we will quickly become irrelevant as an agency."

It is logical, Rogers said, for an agency such as the Fish and Wildlife Service to embrace diversity.

"We preach about biodiversity as a goal our agency is trying to achieve, why not human diversity in the agency's employees?" he said.

Most recently, Rogers was directly involved with launching the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, a 5-year, \$36 million campaign that aims to provide more information about recreational boating and angling opportunities, reduce barriers to participation in the activities, and promote conservation and the responsible use of aquatic resources

Rogers offered some final words of advice for new Service employees who, he is confident, are very well trained in the technical aspects of their jobs.

"You need to learn not to take yourself too seriously," he said. "Have a good time... there's always going to be a tomorrow."

For Rogers, "tomorrow" will surely involve a healthy dose of fishing as he and his wife, Ellen, return to North Carolina to live. He intends to remain active in the field of fish and wildlife conservation and will be able to keep up with the Service through his daughter Susan, who has just started work in the Conway, Arkansas, Ecological Services field office.

Rogers is well-respected not only by his colleagues in the Service, but also by Service partners and constituents and was recently presented with awards from the American Recreation Coalition and the American Sportfishing Association.

*Rachel F. Levin, Public Affairs,
Washington, D.C.*

After 23 Years, Ron Lambertson Calls it a Day

When he retired in May, Ronald E. (Ron) Lambertson left a legacy of strong partnerships, innovative outreach and creative problem solving that made the Northeast region a dependable and respected leader among Service regions.

As Northeast regional director for more than a decade, Lambertson used a hands-off management approach that placed project responsibility squarely on the shoulders of those most closely linked to those projects. The result: a more direct communication process that intercepted many crises before they developed and provided quicker solutions to those that did.

Lambertson's leadership had strong emphasis both internally and externally: apart from pursuing the region's trust responsibilities in fisheries, endangered species and wetlands, and refuges and wildlife, he enhanced partnerships, encouraging staff development and productivity through an innovative programs.

His many friends and colleagues in the conservation world say they are happy Lambertson has reached his personal goal of a comfortable retirement yet, regretful that a strong partner will no longer be a part of their working lives.

"I certainly wish Ron well," said Wayne McCallum, director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, "But I will miss him, too. He has been a good friend, but he has also brought a level of sensitivity of state-federal relations that has been most important over the past decade."

Lambertson also led the Service in developing programs to enhance Congressional relations and broaden public outreach techniques to better convey the Service's message to varied constituencies.

A biologist, lawyer and Colorado native, and a 23-year veteran of federal service, Lambertson became Northeast regional director in May 1988.

Retired but Not Resting: Tom Dwyer Moves On



Region 5 was honored four times during Lambertson's tenure for maintaining the Service's most effective diversity program, highlighted by the innovative "Invest in People" program that seeks to develop greater management-worker trust, mutual dependability and increased productivity across all levels of the region.

Lambertson began his career with the Department of the Interior in 1970 as a lawyer in the office of the Solicitor in Washington, D.C. In 1974, he became assistant solicitor, serving as chief legal advisor to the Service. Then, in 1979, he joined the Service as associate director of Federal Assistance in Washington, D.C.

He was appointed assistant director for Wildlife Resources in 1983. In 1986, he became assistant director for Fish and Wildlife Enhancement. In that capacity, Lambertson directed U.S. implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and served as chairman of the CITES Standing Committee.

In 1992, Lambertson supervised the relocation of the 300-member Northeast Regional office from the Boston suburbs to Hadley, Massachusetts, in the Pioneer Valley some 90 miles west of Boston.

Lambertson and his wife, Bonnie, also a Colorado native, and a schoolteacher by training, say they will likely relocate to the Chesapeake Bay area sometime before 2001.

Spence Conley, External Affairs, Hadley, Massachusetts

Why is this man smiling? *Ron Lambertson retired as regional director in the Northeast after a conservation career spanning nearly a quarter of a century. FWS photo.*

In the 12 years he led the region, Lambertson was recognized by Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt for Meritorious Service, lauded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for his cooperative spirit and, most notably, honored with one of the government's highest individual awards, the Presidential Rank Award, given to a member of the Senior Executive Service in recognition of "sustained supervisory accomplishment... and noteworthy achievement of quality and efficiency in the public service."

Among his accomplishments in the Northeast, Lambertson oversaw creation of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in the 11-million acre Connecticut River watershed. Planned for an area in largely urbanized New England that encompasses the complex interests of more than 400 cities and towns and 2 million residents, the refuge has initiated partnerships with municipalities, land trusts, and other entities to promote protection of the river and its fish and wildlife resources.



On the move. *After three decades with the Service, Tom Dwyer is moving on. FWS photo.*

After a distinguished 31-year career with the Service, Thomas J. Dwyer, deputy regional director of the Pacific region, retired May 27. A specialist in migratory bird issues and operations of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Dwyer recently received a Departmental Meritorious Service Award, among the highest honors the Interior Secretary bestows.

Among Dwyer's many accomplishments is developing the methodology for radio-tracking ducks, which he helped pioneer as a wildlife research biologist at the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, North Dakota. Later, while working in the migratory bird program, he helped write the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, which has become one of the most successful wildlife management plans in the world.

He went on to become co-chair of several joint ventures under the plan, including the Black Duck and Arctic Goose joint ventures. He is currently co-chair of the Pacific Coast joint venture.

A love of hunting and fishing during his youth in rural New York state inspired Dwyer to seek a career with the Service, a choice that has taken him to research and management positions around the United States.

Retired but Not Resting: Tom Dwyer Moves On (continued)

“Every job I’ve ever had has been the best job,” he said. “I’ve had great experiences.”

Before becoming deputy regional director of the Pacific region in 1994, Dwyer was deputy assistant director for Refuges and Wildlife in Washington, D.C. He served as chief and branch chief of the Office of Migratory Bird Management, and was branch chief of migratory bird research at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Maryland.

During his career, Dwyer published a number of scientific papers, received many awards and acted as the Service’s representative to conservation organizations such as the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau, International Council for Bird Preservation, and Wetlands for the Americas.

Dwyer won’t be spending his retirement just hunting and fishing. He’s moving on to a new career with Ducks Unlimited as director of conservation initiatives for the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii. In June, he opened an office for the group in Vancouver, Washington, where he makes his home with his wife, Karen, son and daughter.

In some ways, Dwyer said, the Ducks Unlimited position brings him “full circle” to how he began his career: developing waterfowl habitat. One of his first jobs, while working on his master’s degree in wildlife ecology at the University of Wisconsin, was at the Delta Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Station in Canada. Dwyer also holds bachelor’s degrees from the State University of New York’s College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry, and from Syracuse University.

A summer job at Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge while he was a student convinced Dwyer that his first love was wildlife, not forestry. He’s never regretted the switch.

“The people [in the Service] are wonderful, and they’ve been my second family—sometimes my first family,” he said. “It’s hard to leave but, on the other hand, there’s a time to move on.”

*Joan Jewett, External Affairs,
Portland, Oregon*

Service, Chicago Sign Treaty to Benefit Migratory Birds



Urban birds. Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, introduced an Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds in March. Raptor Center volunteer Frank Taylor, holding a peregrine falcon, looked on. DOI photo: Tami Heilemann.

The urban landscape of Chicago will become a little greener and a lot more friendly to migrating birds in the next few years, thanks to a formal agreement signed in March by Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Clark and Daley put their signatures to the nation’s second Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds, which commits the city and the Service to a long-term partnership aimed at improving the Chicago area’s ability to support bird populations. The treaty carries with it a \$100,000 matching grant from the Service.

According to Daley, the treaty agreement will help shape the city’s conservation efforts. Treaty partners will first work with the Parks District to incorporate bird-friendly landscaping into the city’s parks and open spaces, as well as beginning a campaign to educate homeowners about how to take similar steps in their own backyards.

“The treaty is an important addition to our efforts ... to create open space, enhance habitat and give Chicagoans the opportunity to appreciate and be stewards of the natural environment,” Daley said.

Clark noted that the Urban Conservation Treaty is an innovative way for the Service to expand its efforts to aid wildlife conservation efforts in urban and suburban areas.

“What we do for migratory birds, even in our cities, has the potential to doom a species or to save it from extinction,” she said. “As communities keep growing and expanding, it is important to the health of their environment that they preserve vital open spaces close to home. It’s good for the birds, good for the environment, and good for the people.”

Chicago offers a unique environment that is crucial to the success of dozens of species of migratory birds. More than 7 million birds pass through the Chicago area during their spring and fall migrations, following the Lake Michigan shoreline and stream corridors such as those on the Chicago River.

Salmon Hearings Stir Northwest Waters

The treaty's implementation schedule and goals have been planned by teams composed of City and Service representatives, local conservation organizations, museums, and academic institutions. Working with a broad coalition of partners, the city and the Service will classify and map key habitat for migratory birds along the Lake Michigan shoreline and river and in local parks, cemeteries and other open spaces.

Treaty partners will develop and implement habitat conservation and enhancement programs based on these findings, while coordinating education programs and outreach activities to inform the public about the benefits and needs of urban and migratory birds.

Urban birds are among the nation's most vulnerable bird groups. According to the most recent breeding bird survey conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Service, only 31 percent of urban bird species are estimated to have increasing populations. Their generally declining populations reflect the cumulative effects of habitat loss, deaths from improper pesticide application and predation from domestic cats.

The Urban Conservation Treaty pilot program was started in 1999, when the City of New Orleans became the first Urban Conservation City. The Service hopes to use these agreements as models for bird conservation in other cities in future years.

*Chris Tollefson, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



Expression. Protesters swirled around a public meeting in Clarkston, Washington, on recovering Northwest salmon. FWS photo: Joan Jewett.

Pacific Northwesterners let their passions show and their opinions fly recently over the possibility that salmon—an icon of the region—could soon become extinct in the Columbia River Basin, once the world's greatest producer of salmon. In doing so, citizens boiled a complicated issue down to its most dramatic element: whether to remove four federal hydroelectric dams on the lower Snake River, the Columbia's biggest tributary.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a federal caucus of nine agencies, including the Service, recently wrapped up 15 public hearings that publicly presented for the first time proposals to recover dwindling salmon populations in the lower Snake and Columbia rivers. The hearings gave residents in key Northwest cities an opportunity to comment on the caucus' "All-H paper," a draft document analyzing ocean-to-headwater recovery strategies for 14 species of threatened and endangered salmon and resident fish. Some of the strategies—such as dam-breaching—could, if implemented, spell big changes in the lives of many in the region.

The public also had the opportunity to address the Corps' "Lower Snake River Juvenile Salmon Migration Feasibility Study Draft Environmental Impact Statement," which proposed the controversial dam-breaching as a recovery strategy.

Attendance at the hearings exceeded what the federal caucus expected, with nearly 9,000 people attending 15 hearings in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska. Some 60,000 comments were recorded via oral testimony, taped comments, letters and e-mail.

The caucus provided posters and handouts explaining the science of strategies to save salmon from extinction. Interest groups rented space, usually adjacent to the caucus displays, to get their messages out.

Service officials reacted positively to the hearings.

"I was very impressed with the turnout at the hearings and the public's knowledge of the issues, regardless of whether they supported taking out the dams or leaving them in," said Bill Shake, the geographic assistant regional director for the Columbia

Salmon Hearings Spur Public Testimony

(continued)

Basin Ecoregion. "The Northwest federal agencies' intention is to take citizens' comments very seriously and use them in the decision-making."

The Service stepped away from the rest of the federal caucus last December when it issued its Coordination Act report, required by law, as part of the Corps' draft environmental impact statement. The Service's report concluded that breaching the four lower Snake River dams was the alternative that would provide the most benefit to fish and wildlife in the area of those dams.

Service biologists and officials reached this conclusion after considering an array of peer-reviewed studies, many of which revealed that the current practice of barging juvenile fish past the dams had not stopped salmon from sliding toward extinction.

Other alternatives to be considered in recovery included changes in harvest, hatchery practices and habitat. But the message repeated by officials at the start of each hearing was clear: there will be no easy answer to the salmon crisis.

Many hearing attendees expressed appreciation that the federal government would come to their town at all, much less go out of the way to make sure local citizens got to speak their minds. All of the officials working at the hearings got a chance to talk with the people whose livelihoods could be affected by any of the options, particularly dam-breaching.

Bonneville Power Administration, the wholesaler of power generated by the federal dams and the organizer of the hearings, has hired Chicago-based consulting firm Argonne National Labs to evaluate the public comments. The firm will provide a final demographic analysis to be released alongside the final All-H paper in May. The Corps will release its final environmental impact statement early in 2001.

*Jenny Valdivia, External Affairs,
Portland, Oregon*

Hunting and Fishing by Women and Minorities Offer New Opportunities

New trends present a wide range of conservation and safety opportunities aimed at boosting hunting and fishing participation by several demographic groups, a new Service study suggests.

The study, "Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African-American, Hispanic and Women Hunters and Anglers," is a compilation of data included in the 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, published by the Service every five years. The information includes participation rates, participation levels (days and trips), expenditures, usage of public and private land, types of hunting and fishing, and species pursued.

The study draws comparisons among different population groups and with hunters and anglers in general, noting that hunting and fishing have been dominated by white males since the Service began tracking participation in 1955.

But the study notes further that the nation's African-American and Hispanic populations are growing much faster than any other group, and while women make up 51 percent of the population, female participation in both hunting and fishing has remained below the national average.

Study results suggest that conservation organizations might benefit from focused efforts on these specialized fronts:

■ Fish conservation and safety programs might be targeted to women with less than a high school education because they already fish more than other women. Such programs, the study notes, "could be both well received and cost-effective."

■ Because many African-Americans live in the South and hunt predominantly on private land, "resource managers could increase efforts that would open more private land for hunting by the public."

■ A large proportion of Hispanic anglers live in the West and when they fish, they prefer trout. "Changes in trout fishing regulations or trout fish advisories in the West could have a large impact on this group," the study reports, further suggesting that more wildlife information be circulated in Spanish as well as in English.

African-American anglers spent more days fishing and took more trips, on average, than the other two groups. Hispanic hunters spent more on average for hunting than the other two groups and in the case of trip-related expenditures, more than the national average for all hunters.

African-American hunters spent more days hunting and took more hunting trips per year, on average, than the other two groups.

The entire study is available on the Internet at http://fa.r9.fws.gov/info/publish/rpt_96-6.pdf

*Ken Burton, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Library Links Scientists to Key Databases

The conservation library at the National Conservation Training Center has heard biologists' pleas for improved access to scientific information, and now, thanks to the library's electronic link to the Cambridge Scientific Abstracts Internet Database, a wide variety of data is just a mouse-click away. User help and instruction is available from Cambridge Scientific Abstracts' Web site at <http://www.csa.com/helpV5/overview.html>.

The link to these searchable databases is available from the conservation library's Web site at <http://training.fws.gov/library>.

A one-year pilot test will determine how useful this research tool is to biologists in the field. After a year, data will show which agency programs and offices are using this information system, helping to determine the Service's future access level.

Citations and abstracts on the database are indexed from leading peer-reviewed journals used most often by Service biologists. Collections available include aquatic science and fisheries abstracts, the Biological Science Collection, environmental science and pollution abstracts, conference paper abstracts, the Educational Resources Information Center, MEDLINE, TOXLINE, and the National Technical Information Service.

All Service employees have access to this service via their Service computers. Once a user retrieves articles relevant to particular research needs, a document delivery interface brings up the articles using links to several commercial vendors which can deliver the articles for a fee, or the Department of the Interior Library interlibrary loan service. Users may also obtain articles from many local university libraries.

Any fees incurred are paid by the individual user.

Cambridge Scientific Abstracts maintains a technical support line at 800/843 7751 for questions about the service.

Anne Roy, National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Primate Quadruplets a World Record



Proud mother. *This Hanuman langur, one subject in a Service-University of Jodhpur cooperative study, gave birth to an unprecedented set of quadruplets in March. FWS photo: Anil Chhangani*

In March, scientists working with the Indo-U.S. Primate Project in Jodhpur, India, reported that a Hanuman langur, a primate indigeous to that region, had given birth to quadruplets. It is believed that this is the first record of such an event in the world—either in the wild or in captivity.

Administered by the Office of International Affairs, the primate project is one of a number of successful cooperative efforts between the Service and India.

Though two of the infants died within eight days of the birth, the quadruplets nonetheless were unprecedented for this species. A long-limbed, long-tailed, black-faced monkey common throughout peninsular and southern India, the Hanuman langur is known to occasionally bear twins, but never triplets or quadruplets.

Biologists involved in the on-going Indo-U.S. project on primates, a partnership between the Service and Jainarayan Vyas University in Jodhpur, collect information on the status and distribution of endangered primates and their habitats, train new primatologists, and develop conservation strategies for the long-term benefit of primates in India.

"There is no question this project is significant for the primate conservation," said Herbert Raffaele, chief of the Office of International Affairs, during a 1999 visit to the project area. "Even more importantly, through it India is developing the next generation of primatologists."

Scientists are studying one of the many Hanuman langur troops at Mandore Gardens, a sprawling complex of ruins and partially restored palaces and gardens of what was once the ancient capital of Marwar, close to the Jodhpur city center. Venerated by the Hindus and seldom disturbed, these langurs have lost all fear of humans and depend on the continuous supply of food brought as offerings.

Their lack of timidity makes Hanuman langurs ideal behavioral study candidates and they have provided scientists with a wealth of data over the years.

"Primatologists associated with the project are exploring reasons for this unique reproductive event observed in the Jodhpur langur population," said Dr. S.M. Mohnot, director of the project. "The birth of quadruplets has come as a great surprise."

Studies on the Jodhpur langur population indicate that 97.8 percent of births are single with only 2.2 percent twin births.

Dr. Mohnot explained that the newborns died because the ability of the mother to suckle all four infants was limited. Because nursing mothers do not suckle infants other than their own, chances for survival of all four infants were remote.

The Service's involvement in India goes back to 1977. Initially dependent upon excess U.S.-owned Indian rupees (Special Foreign Currency Program), establishment of the U.S.-India Fund in 1987 has allowed the Service to continue providing project support.

The primate project is one of 15 U.S.-India Fund projects currently coordinated by the Service.

David A. Ferguson, Office of International Affairs, Arlington, Virginia

Out with the Old, In with the New: Service Video Updates Image



A new look. *The updated Service orientation video features interviews with veteran employees and narration by a Broadway actress.*
FWS photo.

When the Service puts its best face forward on video, wide ties, “mod” hair-dos and suits with white stitching along the lapels no longer cut it.

So when Mona Womack, deputy director of the National Conservation Training Center, and Bonnie Schires, former chief of its employee excellence branch, took another look at the Service’s orientation videotape for new employees, “It’s In Your Hands,” they decided the time-tested video had outlived its usefulness.

Furthermore, the Service had outgrown its early 1980’s image. The agency, its functions, its diversity, and its world outlook had evolved greatly over nearly two decades. It was time for a change—one that would carry the Service and its orientation programs for new staff into the next century.

Make room on your video shelves for “The Journey Begins/The Tradition Continues—A Welcome to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for New Employees,” a 30-minute video from NCTC’s training and education materials production division, which premiered in February when copies were distributed to all field stations.

The new video is “designed to tell the story of the Fish and Wildlife Service, in the words of agency employees themselves,” according to Schires, who served as project officer for “The Journey Begins/The Tradition Continues.” More than 20 Service employees, drawn from a variety of duty stations and occupations, star in the new production.

In another break with tradition, the new orientation video is narrated by Broadway actress and film personality Kaiulani Lee, author and star of the play, “A Sense of Wonder,” a two-act production based on the life and writings of Fish and Wildlife Service employee Rachel Carson. Lee has presented “A Sense of Wonder” to agency employees at Washington’s Main Interior Building and at NCTC; she was so impressed with the training center that she offered her assistance to NCTC Director Rick Lemon on future conservation projects.

The video is the first component in the Service’s newly-revised employee orientation

program, which has been redesigned with the input and assistance of the Washington and regional offices and the agency’s personnel division and Office of Diversity and Civil Rights. Other new products in “distance learning” format are included in the redesign; a “Web Links” orientation component replaces the Service’s outdated employee handbook and presents up-to-date information about the agency, its programs, and personnel benefits.

Randy Lennon, a former NCTC senior videographer, produced “The Journey Begins/The Tradition Continues,” with assistance from NCTC videographers George Gentry and Ryan Hagerty, and contract videographer Melissa Wallace. Senior writer-editor David Klinger wrote the script and contract editors Amber Perkins and Doug Canfield provided post-production services.

David Klinger, National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Video Already Making a Difference

Though it has only been available for a few months, the Service’s new employee orientation video is already making an impact, as shown in this letter to the National Conservation Training Center from Raymond E. Brown, a wildlife biologist at the Service’s Austin, Texas, ecological services field office.

Brown wrote, in part:

“I just finished watching your video, ‘The Journey Begins/The Tradition Continues.’ Having seen numerous organization and agency videos over the years, I must tell you that yours is the most inspirational that I have ever seen. I was nearly moved to tears on more than one instance, especially at the beginning when Rachel Carson’s life and career were being discussed.

“I formerly worked for agencies whose missions included protection for natural resources, but whose main goals were to ensure the continued flow of natural resources (e.g. trees, oil, minerals) from public and private lands. In my previous positions, I always felt very strong resistance within the agencies against my efforts toward the conservation and preservation of wildlife and wild lands. All of my efforts toward conservation always necessitated an uphill battle within my own agencies, and I rarely felt supported by my supervisors and coworkers in my efforts.

“...Your video has brought me hope that the USFWS is a more supportive environment, and indeed, I have already experienced support and appreciation for my efforts in my new position with the USFWS. Thanks again for your excellent video production.”

Groundhog Shadow Spotted on Capitol Hill



Me and my shadow. *Mingo Job Corps student Candice Beston got a taste of life on Capitol Hill when she spent a day with U.S. Representative JoAnn Emerson. FWS photo.*

Mingo Job Corps student Candice Beston, 20, will always remember February 2, 2000. Beston shadowed Congresswoman JoAnn Emerson, the U.S. Representative from the 8th district of Missouri, through a Job Corps program called the Groundhog Job Shadow Day, sponsored annually by Colin Powell's America's Promise program. Some 600,000 students nationwide shadow people working in an occupation in which they are interested.

The day began with a briefing of scheduled meetings and events, which Beston and Rep. Emerson reviewed and modified. The first official order of business was to check e-mail messages and review the daily Congressional publications "The Hill," "CQ Daily Monitor" and "Congress Daily AM" to find out what the topics of discussion would be on the House floor and what bills would be voted on during the day.

Next, Beston attended the GOP Women's Marriage Tax Penalty press conference along with several other congresswomen. Rep. Emerson spoke against the marriage tax penalty and why it is out of date. Beston reported that several national television and cable news networks covered the press conference.

After the press conference and a few telephone calls, it was time for lunch in the Congress Members Only dining hall in the Capitol Building. During lunch, Beston had the opportunity to meet and talk with Congresswoman Mary Bono of California, who asked Beston how she could get a Job Corps student to shadow her.

After lunch, Beston participated in a meeting with faculty from Ohio Wesleyan University, Rep. Emerson's alma mater, as well as meetings with the British and German delegations attending the National Prayer Breakfast. Beston got a chance to tell the British delegation how the Job Corps program has helped her.

Rep. Emerson felt that she benefitted from being shadowed as much as Beston did.

"Candice was terrific and not only participated in our meetings, but added a lot to the discussions," she said.

"All in all, it was a wonderful experience," said Beston, summing up her day. "I loved everything about Washington, D.C., from my hotel to Ms. Emerson's staff. I will remember Ms. Emerson for allowing me to invade her work day and get more of an in depth look at how our government is run."

Kerry Hinton, Job Corps, Washington, DC

Doing Better Outreach

In the past few years, two refuges, Monomoy NWR on Cape Cod, and Florida Keys NWR faced tough situations in the face of controversial actions. In both cases negative public reactions to Service decisions required emergency outreach efforts to quell the controversy.

And in both cases Service staff learned an important lesson: protecting endangered species and their habitats was much easier when they used proactive outreach to build a level of trust and communication with the public that matched the potential of Service actions to generate controversy.

These two cases, and a number of others from around the Service, now serve as lessons for others about how to do effective outreach as part of a paper titled "Multifaceted Approaches to Outreach in a Natural Resources Agency." The paper was co-authored last spring by a group of Service outreach practitioners and a management consultant.

A few common principles of effective outreach stand out. The first step—and often the most important one—is to listen to the public and potential partners. Laying a foundation of proactive outreach will build trust, open communication, and prevent controversy.

Outreach is essential if the Service is to accomplish its mission, the paper says, and Service staff should see it as an integral part of their job.

"Outreach is a mix of approaches and tools," said Janet Ady, chief of the Division of Education Outreach at the National Conservation Training Center and a co-author of the paper. "It includes public relations—informing the public about what we do and generating support for our conservation programs.

"It's an educational process for increasing people's knowledge about threats to wildlife. And it involves influencing human behavior and managing conflicts between people and wildlife," Ady said.

Doing Better Outreach

(continued)

Ady said she wanted to see what Service employees nationwide were learning from both positive and negative outreach experiences. Working with a consultant, she identified cases from all geographic regions and all Service program areas.

They selected fourteen cases illustrating the public relations, people management and educational functions of outreach, including the episodes at Monomoy and Florida Keys refuges.

Other examples included a program to develop partnerships with ranchers in the Nebraska Sandhills, the Shorebird Sister Schools Network, and the National Eagle Repository, which supplies Native Americans with eagle feathers for spiritual uses.

Although outreach specialists carried out some of these efforts, staff biologists and resource managers undertook most of them.

Last July, Barry Stieglitz, chief of the Branch of Planning and Policy for the Division of Refuges and a co-author of the paper, presented the paper at the 2nd International Wildlife Management Congress in Hungary, the theme of which was "Wildlife, Land, and People: Priorities for the 21st Century."

"Almost all of the presentations dealt with the human and social dimensions of conservation—with the people issues," Stieglitz said. "I was glad to be able to show wildlife experts and managers from all over the world that the Fish and Wildlife Service is making a real effort to incorporate outreach into all we do, and to learn how to do it better."

The paper was coauthored by Ady, Stieglitz, Heather Johnson-Schultz of the Migratory Bird program in Anchorage, Alaska, and a conservation consultant. It is available on the Web at <http://www.fws.gov/r9extaff/outreachreport.html>.

*Bruce Byers,
Falls Church, Virginia*

Editor's Note: The author is a consultant in conservation and natural resources management.

Whatcha Gonna Do When They Come For You?

Not everyone plays fair. That's why the television show "Cops" will never run out of material and the Internet has done nothing to improve the morality of crooks and frauds.

Instead, it's become another channel for the bad guys to take advantage of people. Some less-than-honest people create fake Web sites, ask for your credit card number and steal your money. Others create Web sites that look legitimate but contain misinformation to confuse the reader.

The Service is headed towards e-commerce; the National Conservation Training Center will register you for a class and sell you a videotape online now. We want to ensure our customers can distinguish the real thing from a knockoff.

Imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, but it can be confusing even when it is not fraudulent. The Service is not immune to harmless spoofs or malicious sites that could confuse customers regarding policies and objectives.

Two things identify official Service Web sites: our logo and our Internet address (the "URL"). Unlike other Service graphics and pictures, the agency logo is not in the public domain for general use. It is a controlled image whose use must be authorized by the Service. There's even a "logo cop," Mitch Snow, chief of the Office of Media Services in Washington, who keeps a watchful eye out for Web sites or publications using the Service logo without official approval.

The Division of Information Resources Management assigns all URLs ending in "fws.gov." The National Communications Center in Denver manages what could grow into as many as 64,000 addresses in that domain. No one else may identify their sites with the "fws.gov" domain.

The Web Publishing Council has adopted design standards for all Service home pages to enhance recognition of official sites and so that customers will recognize each program is part of the Service (see sidebar). If you see an "official" Service Web site that is not an "fws.gov" URL or is using our logo without authorization, contact your council representative (on the Intranet at <http://si2.fws.gov/webpublish/wpelist.html>).

*Charlie Grymes, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Making URLs Easier to Remember

Eventually, nearly every Service facility will have a Web site where Internet users will be able to find an office's functions and hours of operation, fill out a volunteer form or to get the Service's perspective on local conservation issues. Thanks to the Division of Information Resources Management and the Service Web Publishing Council, these Web sites will be easy to access as well as packed with useful information.

Recognizing that long URLs such as <http://www.fws.gov/r9extaff/pafaq/pafaq.html> might discourage instant-gratification-oriented Internet surfers from visiting our Web sites, the Service is changing many URLs so that they are easier to remember and quicker to type.

Easy-to-remember URLs will help steer customers immediately to where they want to go. For example, **reelfoot.fws.gov** takes people directly to the home page for Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge while **permits.fws.gov** is a one-stop shopping site that handles permit topics involving multiple offices.

Choosing an easy-to-remember URL may require some advance planning. There are multiple offices in Bismarck, North Dakota, and Green Bay, Wisconsin, for example, and the Service has offices in Ashland, Wisconsin and Ashland, Oregon. So who gets the easy-to-remember URL for **bismarck.fws.gov**, **greenbay.fws.gov** or **ashland.fws.gov**? The Service's Web Publishing Council is the final word on URL names, reviewing all requests and resolving the conflicts.

New Web sites are created from the start with easy-to-remember URLs and visitors are automatically redirected to new addresses when long URLs have been changed. Contact your regional Web Publishing Council representative for more information.

Charlie Grymes

Sharing CITES with Students in Spain

Many Service employees share their expertise by teaching courses at a local college or university. Dr. Susan Lieberman, chief of the Office of Scientific Authority under International Affairs, recently spent some time teaching part of a master's degree program focused on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, better known as CITES.

She was hardly at a local institution, though. Lieberman, a long-time expert on scientific and other issues associated with CITES, was a guest instructor at a 12-week course offered through Spain's Universidad Internacional Andalucia to Spanish-speaking students chiefly from Central and South America and the Caribbean.

The course, which ran from October to December 1999, took place on a special campus in the medieval town of Baeza, in southern Spain.

Lieberman's course module focused on the role of the Service's Scientific Authority, the scientific basis for CITES decision making. Dr. Edgard Espinosa, deputy director of the Service's National Forensics Laboratory in Ashland, Oregon, also participated as an instructor. They were joined by representatives from the Mexican and British scientific authorities.

Classes were held in a 15th century building, Lieberman said, but the university provided twenty-first century amenities such as computers and Internet access—which proved surprisingly popular with the students and useful for her.

"The United States had submitted its proposals for the next CITES meeting on the previous Friday and on Tuesday, I sat down with those students and looked at our proposals on the Service's Web site," Lieberman said. "I was able to explain why we submitted some materials and why we didn't submit others."

While in Baeza, Lieberman taught biologists, zoologists and botanists, as well as lawyers and public affairs specialists. Students came to the program from Mexico, Venezuela, Cuba, Argentina, Spain, Colombia and other Spanish-speaking countries, as well as Italy and Brazil. Lieberman lectured in English while an interpreter translated her remarks into Spanish, though she said she was able to communicate in Spanish with the students in conversations outside the classroom.

Lieberman said she was impressed by the students' wide array of backgrounds and goals.

"One woman was an attorney from Panama who is completely rewriting her country's environmental legislation," she said. "Another student is doing her thesis on the conservation of cats claw, a medicinal plant from Peru, and whether or not it should be proposed for CITES."

In her lectures, Lieberman discussed the CITES process and how the United States makes listing decisions. She found she had a rapt audience.

"They were very interested because no one from the United States had ever sat down with them before and explained how we do this," she said. "We show a lot of global leadership in the conservation arena through CITES, but how we get there is not always clear [to others]."

Lieberman said her time in Spain was well spent and that she hopes others will be able to represent the Service through programs like this, either at home or abroad.

"It behooves us to continue to be involved," she observed, "and to go again. I think it's good for the United States and for the Service. We need to work [with other CITES member nations] much more... because there is much we can learn from each other."

*Mary Maruca, International Affairs,
Arlington, Virginia*

Keeping Species—and Tradition—Alive and Well



Valuable resource. Service biologist Ken Williams releases a lesser prairie chicken after collecting biological data. FWS photo.

For a decade, Jim Weaver has been building his ranch in eastern New Mexico. Today, it's a 15,000-acre affair of mid- to tallgrass prairie supporting some 350 head of Mashona cattle, and, more importantly, a healthy and diverse wildlife base.

Weaver is participating in a nationwide Service-sponsored program called Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, which allows landowners to receive economic incentives if they voluntarily manage or enhance native habitat for species at risk. He manages his spread with an eye toward protecting habitat for the lesser prairie chicken, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

It comes as no surprise that Weaver was the first rancher in New Mexico to sign up for this program. While a researcher at Cornell University's Laboratory of Ornithology, Weaver co-founded The Peregrine Fund, an organization dedicated to preserving the peregrine falcon. Peregrine recovery has been a model for cooperation and hands-on management of imperiled wildlife and their habitats. The American peregrine falcon was removed from the Endangered Species list in August 1999.

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Keeping Species—and Tradition—Alive and Well (continued)

Ranching was not passed down through generations in Weaver's family, yet he understands many of its traditions. He is making a new set of footprints on the relatively virgin soil of holistic ranching so that future generations will have the chance to enjoy a lifestyle that keeps people close to the land, a lifestyle that may otherwise be as endangered as some of the species that once thrived on the range.

"You really can't buy a ranch today and make it pay," he said. "If you want to sustain your land and your wildlife for your children and your grandchildren, you have to go back to square one and rethink things. In this part of the country you can't have one without the other. It requires a long-term view."

In return for taking that long view and improving native habitat, landowners like Weaver who participate in the Candidate Conservation Agreement program receive assurances that if the species targeted in the agreement does require protection under the Endangered Species Act, they will not be subject to increased land use restrictions beyond what is specified in the agreement.

Bellwether Species

At the turn of the 20th century, as a consequence of settlement and cultivation to fill the need for food and fiber, the landscape and the ecosystem of the High Plains became severely altered. Nonnative vegetation such as Russian thistle (a.k.a. tumbleweed) could easily gain a foothold and invade the damaged range. As the native grasses disappeared, so did many grassland birds, including the lesser-prairie chicken.

The decline in grassland birds has been the single most dramatic indicator that the High Plains are in deep trouble. The presence of these sentinel species is a reliable gauge of overall ecological health; their disappearance forecasts a similar fate for many species unless action is taken immediately.

Ben Ikenson

To date, at least nine agreements with landowners in Oklahoma and New Mexico are working to improve 48,000 acres in the southern High Plains.

Service biologists hope that by systematically addressing the needs of species at risk in this area—including the mountain plover, burrowing owl, black-footed ferret and black-tailed prairie dog—the entire ecosystem will eventually be restored.

As for restoring the lesser prairie chicken, adequate nesting cover is an important limiting factor for the bird, which requires standing dead grass at least 20 inches tall in which to nest each spring. To accomplish this, some areas of a ranch must receive late growing-season rest from grazing, which can improve overall range condition and, ultimately, a rancher's profitability.

Over the long term, Weaver said, practices that prove to be good for wildlife are also good for the ranching operation.

"Additionally, one of the more obvious benefits to the landowner is that eventually, if ecosystem condition improves, species will not require protection under the Endangered Species Act," he said.

Like his neighbors and colleagues in the Candidate Conservation Agreement program, Weaver is interested in natural resources and has a vested interest in taking care of his land. He wants to be able to give his grandchildren the option of enjoying the kind of lifestyle he has become attached to through the years.

"It's a good life," he said. "Human closeness to the land and its non-human inhabitants is necessary to the survival of both."

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Endangered Texas Wildrice Finds Refuge at Hatchery



Saving the day. Cathy Nordfelt and Val Cantu, San Marcos National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center, rescue endangered Texas wildrice from the San Marcos River. FWS photo.

While some folks fretted over a Y2K meltdown on New Year's Eve, biologists at the San Marcos National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center contended with an accidental drawdown of the San Marcos River in central Texas.

The new year ushered in heavy rains and a low-head dam breached near the town of San Marcos. With the dam compromised, the river dropped and narrowed, leaving a quarter of the entire population of endangered Texas wildrice—found only in the San Marcos River—either high and dry or in water flowing too fast.

"With so few plants out there in the wild, we had to act decisively or risk losing up to 400 plants," said Paula Power, botanist at the San Marcos hatchery. "We potted and transferred 184 wildrice plants to the hatchery. Another 60 plants were moved to safer sites within the river."

Prairie Jewels of the Refuge System Shine Bright

In 1978, the Service listed Texas wildrice as endangered, and since 1996 hatcheries have played a critical role in conserving wildrice. About 40 wildrice plants are normally kept at the San Marcos facility and an additional 40 plants are maintained at Uvalde NFH in Uvalde, Texas.

The second refugia population at Uvalde lends an added layer of security to the species' recovery. Workers at both hatcheries keep the plants healthy and repot tillers, the product of asexual reproduction, that grow into mature wildrice. These new plants are ultimately transplanted to face the rigors of life in the river.

"Our experience with Texas wildrice in the hatcheries proved invaluable when the dam broke," said Power. "Moreover, without a place to move the plants, recovery of wildrice would have been set back significantly. The hatcheries mean a lot for the future of Texas wildrice."

Service hatchery personnel didn't go at it alone. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Service's Austin Ecological Services Field Office chipped in slinging shovels for the salvage. The transplanted and salvaged wildrice plants are monitored regularly and are doing well. Those salvaged plants housed at the San Marcos hatchery are being cared for until they can be returned to the San Marcos River.

Craig Springer, Division of Fisheries, Albuquerque, New Mexico



Jewel in the refuge system crown. "Amidst the joy of the prairie spring you work... you are her stewards," Refuges Chief Jim Kurth told employees in the Prairie Pothole region of the upper Midwest. SCS photo: Tim McCabe.

Temperatures outside were well below zero, but enthusiasm warmed the meeting room as staff from the 40 wetland management districts of the National Wildlife Refuge System met to share challenges and ideas in Fargo, North Dakota, in January. The meeting, a first of its kind in scope and attendance, attracted Service employees from the Prairie Pothole region of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska.

The objectives of the meeting were to foster communication and consistency in management of the Service's Small Wetland Program across regions 3 and 6—an ecosystem stretching from the Rocky Mountains east to Wisconsin and the Canadian border south to Nebraska. This area includes more than 3,000 waterfowl production areas preserving more than 1,000 square miles of wetland and prairie habitat, and 25,000 easements protecting 1.6 million acres of wetlands and grassland on private lands.

Areas of discussion included monitoring techniques for grassland communities, prairie restoration techniques, and making wetland management districts and waterfowl production areas better known within and outside the Service.

A highlight of the meeting was a keynote address by Jim Kurth, chief of the Division of Refuges. Excerpts from Kurth's address speak to the special work on the prairies, and these unique places of the refuge system:

"I envy you, as I have only known glimpses of this land, I've not lived her seasons. Amidst the joy of the prairie spring you will work. You are her stewards, you tend to her needs. Your care and concern will be obvious—you know that all is not well. The waters and fires that nourish the prairies no longer flow freely as they had for thousands of years. Strange plants from far away places continue a malignant invasion."

"I think of the things that you will do—the triage of land management in the prairies. There are drainage tiles to be removed, ditch plugs to be installed, invasive plants to be fought with increasingly sophisticated weaponry. You will negotiate deals to protect more land, and you will help your neighbors care for their land with more thoughtful stewardship."

"You will study and learn. You will count and categorize, map and hypothesize, you will plant, spray, and burn. You'll grow wiser, which will make you humbler. And in those simple, humble moments when you discover a downy nest of freshly laid eggs, you'll know in your hearts how fortunate we are to share a profession and a cause that we would trade for no other."

Jason Barker, Detroit Lakes WMD, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota

Don Hultman, Division of Refuges, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Words and Images Reflect Past, Future of Conservation

Service employees and their relatives from across the country submitted poems and photos for the Interior Department's 150th Anniversary National Photography and Poetry contests, themed "Guardians of the Past, Stewards for the Future."

Although no Service submissions placed in the national photo contest, three poems captured honorable mentions. Over the next several months, Fish & Wildlife News will publish a number of the entries in a salute to those who entered and to Service employees nationwide who serve as guardians of the past and stewards for our conservation legacy.

Congratulations to the winners and to all who submitted their work.

Three Earn Poetry Mentions

Three Service entries into the Department of the Interior's national poetry contest captured honorable mentions. Congratulations to employees Charman Adams of Mississippi's St. Catherine's Creek NWR and Kyle Merriam of Ecological Services in Sacramento, California, and to family member Robin Helm of Vancouver, Washington. Their poems were re-printed in the February/March issue of *People, Land and Water*, the DOI newspaper.



American alligator. Shane Guan, Division of Fisheries, Arlington, Virginia



Desert bighorn sheep.
*Lynn B. Starnes,
Fisheries,
Albuquerque, New
Mexico*



California clapper rail. *Carmen
Thomas, Ecological
Services,
Sacramento,
California*

Words and Images Reflect Past, Future of Conservation (continued)



Rites of Spring. Merced, California, Dale Garrison, Ecological Services, Sacramento, California



Osprey. Howard J. Schlegel, *Refuges and Wildlife*, Laurel, Maryland



MV Tiglax at Chuginadak. Alaska, Brian L. Anderson, *Refuges and Wildlife*, Anchorage, Alaska

Mingo Job Corps Crew Helps Control California Blaze



Fiery situation. Mingo Job Corps squad boss Wendell Clinton on the job at the High Complex in California. FWS photo.

Twenty staff and students from Mingo Job Corps Center in Missouri traveled to northern California last winter to join 1,800 other wildland firefighters and support personnel representing 30 states in battling a blaze dubbed "High Complex." Lightning had ignited 19 fires that burned more than 30,000 acres near Lake Shasta.

The Mingo crew focused its efforts on the southernmost Bohemotash fire located 15 miles northwest of Redding, with the goal of reducing the threat of fire to private property, recreational areas and nearly 800 homes near the lake.

The job of the Mingo staff and students when they head to a blaze is to contain the fire by building a fireline, said crew boss and residential programs officer Robert Waldner.

"The crew has done an outstanding job above and beyond what was expected of them," Waldner said. "They have been a super representative of Missouri and of the Job Corps program. Morale has remained high despite the long, 16-plus hour days the crew has endured."

Crew members clearly benefitted from the experience, despite its intensity.

"My first day on the fireline was really tough," recalled student Jeremy Young. "Hauling a 40 pound pack at 7,000 feet was challenging, but my confidence in myself

and my squad improved with each passing day. I had to learn to pace myself and take in plenty of fluids to avoid fatigue."

Fighting fires proved to be an uncertain situation but the Mingo crew persevered even in the face of danger.

On their seventh day in California, the crew met a precarious situation. As they cleared a gulch to Lake Shasta, daylight disappeared. A helicopter pilot thought it would be quickest for them to proceed down a clear run through the bottom of the canyon to the lake, but the terrain was treacherous and they were forced to take an alternate route which led them into a dangerous back burn.

"We walked through the burn to a safety zone and spent the night with fire blazing on all sides," recalled squad boss Wendell Clinton.

Ironically, the crew kept warm in the 30–40 degree temperatures by building campfires with any remaining fuel they could find before hiking out at day break.

Don Riggle, director at the Mingo Job Corps Center, began the fire training program some two years ago; he and his staff have trained more than 100 young people to fight fires and Mingo crews have participated in firefighting efforts throughout the Midwest, Southeast and California. Firefighting, Riggle said, provides the students with self-confidence and discipline, and on a practical level, a bonus to the readjustment allowance that they receive when they graduate from the program.

Student Ken Byram left for California the day before his graduation ceremony, anxious to put his firefighting training to work in future pursuits.

"I am looking forward to going to the Heavy Equipment Union Apprenticeship Training Program in Denver, Colorado," he said. "This [firefighting] has been a lot of hard work, but I'm in great physical condition."

Robert Barth, Mingo Job Corps Center, Puxico, Missouri



Committee Promotes a Diverse Workforce.

To help achieve the goal of a diverse and high-quality workforce, the new Washington Office Diversity Committee works with the Directorate to enhance partnership and outreach, recruitment and retention, education and training, and equal employment and affirmative action concerns. "A diverse workforce will allow the Service to have the broadest view of any issues," said the committee's Ellen Gee, who works in the office of Diversity and Civil Rights, "and the ability to reach-out and develop partnerships with communities of diverse constituents."

Pictured above, left to right: Stephanie Nash (Ecological Services); Phyllis Cook (Planning and Budget); Nicholas Chavez (Law Enforcement); Committee Chair, Christina Moody (Division of Fish and Wildlife Management); Denise Thompson (Administration); Linda Shook (NCTC); Ellen Gee; Geri Watkins (Fisheries); and Co-chair, Michael L. Smith (External Affairs). Committee members not pictured: Tina Hayes (Refuges and Wildlife); Kristen Nelson (International Affairs); Carrie Thompson (Planning and Budget); and Bonnie Schires (Personnel Operations).

Text by Kristen Nelson, Office of Management Authority, Arlington, Virginia. FWS photo: LaVonda Walton.

Group Targets Native Medicinal Plant Conservation



Prevention. Marketed as *Echinacea*, purple cone-flower is one species being targeted for conservation before it becomes scarce. FWS photo: Elise Smith.

The U.S. market for medicinal herbs is worth more than \$3 billion and is growing by about 20 percent per year. At least 175 species of plants native to North America are sold in the non-prescription medicinal market in the United States, and more than 140 native U.S. medicinal herbs have been documented in herbal products and medicines in foreign countries.

Dozens—possibly hundreds—of these are collected in large quantities from the wild in the United States.

Recognizing that commercial demands may cause overharvesting—and eventually depletion—of U.S. native plants, representatives from government, industry, academia, tribes and conservation organizations formed the Medicinal Plant Working Group under the umbrella of the Plant Conservation Alliance. The alliance, a consortium of ten federal agencies and more than 145 non-federal partners representing various plant conservation disciplines, works to prevent native plant extinction and promote native habitat restoration.

Facilitated by the Service, the Medicinal Plant Working Group's primary mission is to help balance biological and commercial needs to minimize regulatory intervention on behalf of native medicinal plants such as goldenseal, ginseng and purple cone-flower. Objectives include:

- generating and sharing information regarding species of medicinal and economic importance and conservation concern;
- promoting appropriate conservation measures for native medicinal plants;
- promoting sustainable production of native medicinal plants;
- increasing participation in native medicinal plant conservation; and
- generating financial support for native medicinal plant projects.

The working group's membership includes representatives from 28 states and tribes and three foreign countries, as well as committee chairs from the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Defense, Botanical Liaisons, the University of Maryland, Wilcox Natural Products, Ticonderoga Farms, Inc., the U.S. Botanic Gardens, and TRAFFIC North America.

A core group of members meets regularly by conference call to discuss progress, and the working group is finalizing its strategic plan. Objectives outlined in the plan include selecting specific species of concern for each region of the country for which to develop conservation measures, and creating a list of actions for the public to help conserve medicinals, such as buying products only from cultivated sources.

Julie Lyke, Office of Scientific Authority, Arlington, Virginia

Zuni Pueblo Tribe Manages Eagle Facility



Home. A golden eagle caught in a sunbeam at the new Zuni Pueblo aviary. Zuni Department of Fish and Wildlife photo: Steve Albert.

Malcolm Bowekaty, governor of the Zuni Pueblo tribe in western New Mexico, is proud of the latest addition to the reservation. With its earth tones and pueblo-style architecture, the new building blends well against a backdrop of sharp-edged mesas. Vertical rows of neatly ordered pine slats separated by two-inch gaps form the walls, and lend the structure an airiness that is important to its nine occupants: five golden and four bald eagles.

"Not only do we revere wildlife," Bowekaty said, "many species... are sacred and some are considered to be incarnations of our ancestors. One of these is the eagle, and many aspects of our religion call for the use of eagle feathers."

Obtaining those feathers is easier now that there is an aviary on the reservation.

Under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which has safeguarded bald eagles since 1940 and golden eagles since 1962, tribes must apply for permits and officially request eagle feathers and parts from the Service's National Eagle Repository near Denver,

Arkansas River Shiner Takes Road Trip to Recovery



In agreement. Southwest Regional Director Nancy Kaufman met with Governor Malcolm Bowekaty in January to sign a statement that “[avoids] conflicts concerning the management of fish and wildlife,” and “recognizes Zuni Tribal sovereignty and works within the context of a government to government relationship.” FWS photo.

Colorado. The facility collects birds specifically for the purpose of distributing carcasses or feathers to tribes.

“While this system has its benefits, it often takes more than three years to receive an eagle carcass,” said Steve Albert, director of the Zuni Fish and Wildlife Department. “This is an unacceptably long delay when a tribal religious leader needs feathers for an upcoming ceremony.”

The new Zuni Pueblo aviary houses eagles specifically so that tribe members can use the feathers in religious ceremonies. The tribe is not authorized to keep carcasses in the facility or kill birds.

As the largest of the 19 New Mexico Indian Pueblos, the Zuni has remained one of the most traditional tribes in North America. Zuni devotion to tradition has been the reason for numerous feather requests. For the past few years, according to Albert, up to 40 percent of requests to the National Eagle Repository from the Service’s Southwest region were from members of the Zuni tribe.

Four years ago, the tribe initiated discussions with the Service about how to alleviate the waiting period problem.

“One of the alternatives,” Albert said, “was to build our own eagle aviary, with the hope that there would be a supply of non-releasable birds to place in it.”

Birds with broken bones or only one wing, and those that are blind or have other permanent injuries, are considered non-releasable. Eagle rehabilitators—certified veterinarians trained to rehabilitate eagles and other raptors—usually determine whether a bird has regained the ability to survive in the wild and may be released.

“Any tribe can have eagle aviaries with the appropriate permits,” said John Antonio, Service’s Native American Liaison for the Southwest region. “But to fulfill the various technical requirements, it takes some innovation and a great deal of determination.”

After the Zuni Pueblo council learned the technical requirements to run an eagle facility, they began constructing the aviary, using private donor funding and donations of time and materials from the Zuni community. Noted Albuquerque architects Claude Armstrong and Donna Cohen volunteered their expertise in designing the building to strongly reflect its natural surroundings.

The main flight area is 100 feet long by 25 feet wide and 18 feet high, with four smaller enclosed areas for flightless birds. The floor is of river-washed pea gravel and the facade is made from locally quarried Zuni sandstone. The lumber on the ends is from sustainably harvested trees milled at the Zuni Community Sawmill. The front of the building deliberately faces toward Dowia Yallane, a mesa that is sacred to the Pueblo tribe.

After requesting and receiving permits from the Service to possess live eagles, the tribe received two non-releasable mature bald eagles from two eagle rehabilitators in New Mexico and Oklahoma. Since then, under current terms of the agreement, one of the bald eagles was sent to the eagle repository after it died.

The tribe later received another three immature golden eagles. Subsequent eagles have come from other rehabilitation centers.

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*



Angled down. Habitat losses have caused downward trends in threatened Arkansas River shiner populations. FWS photo: Ken Collins.

Stiff springs on the four-wheel drive jostled the biologists around the truck cab as they drove toward the Pecos River and their quarry: the Arkansas River shiner. The road bisected low hills rounded off by incessant winds. Only stiff, scrubby creosotes stood unyielding to the wind to break the monotonous view.

The shallow Pecos makes a wide swath across this landscape, typical of plains streams: slow flowing over a low gradient, and sand. The banks are sand. The bottom is sand—and it’s transitory, always moving. The river elbows its way into the foot of a hill, eroding in one place, depositing in another. Only alien salt cedar plants that rim the river hold the banks in place—and only temporarily.

Another alien species lives here, too. The Arkansas River shiner was brought to the Pecos River via an inadvertent bait bucket introduction some 22 years ago. It became established here while in its native range—the Arkansas River from Kansas south to Arkansas—extinction looms like a semi coming head-on in the wrong lane. Dwindling water, poor water quality, and flood flows tempered by reservoirs have all contributed to the species’ decline in its native habitat, which led to a threatened designation in 1998.

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Arkansas River Shiner Takes Road Trip to Recovery (continued)

The Pecos River itself is a reservoir of Arkansas River shiners. The biologists—from the Service's Oklahoma and New Mexico fishery resources offices and Tulsa Ecological Services office, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish—were making what could be a milestone in the shiner's road to recovery. Their purpose: collect shiners and carry them back alive to Tishomingo National Fish Hatchery for captive propagation.

"Hatcheries are increasingly important to endangered species conservation," said Brent Bristow, a biologist at the Oklahoma Fishery Resources Office. "Witness the successes with paddlefish in the Mississippi basin or trouts in the Southwest. There's a hatchery component to all, but hatcheries cannot go at it alone. In front of any successful conservation project is habitat restoration."

The Arkansas River shiner dwells in advancing ridges of sand across the stream bottom. Summer freshets flush and erode, keeping ridges moving.

"These transitory ridges provide two things, a place to eat and a place to rest," said Chris Hoagstrom, a biologist with the New Mexico Fishery Resources Office. "Flows with the right amount of turbulence are paramount to maintaining habitat for this animal. The turning sand turns up food for shiners lying in wait. Stop the flows and you essentially stop feeding fish."

While the Service works to restore habitat for the shiner, Tishomingo NFH tries to steer this fish down the right conservation road—learning to feed and spawn the Arkansas shiner in captivity. The learning curve is steep, the stakes high.

In the end, after three days of seining, 300 shiners made the 500-mile trip to the hatchery, where they are doing quite well. It's a long way from southeast New Mexico to the hatchery in Oklahoma. Long, too, is the road to recovery for the Arkansas shiner, but concerted conservation efforts like this one can make the journey quicker.

Craig Springer, Division of Fisheries, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Volunteer Donates an Astonishing 10,000 Hours



Generous. Volunteer Peter Fisher has donated his time at a number of refuges in the Southeast and Southwest, including thousands of hours spent doing projects at Georgia's Okefenokee NWR. FWS photo.

Peter Fisher, a volunteer at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, has dedicated more than 10,000 hours of his time to the Service since 1995. He has staffed visitor centers, maintained trails, painted signs and helped refuges across the country with a variety of maintenance duties.

Fisher retired in 1995 after 37 years at the Paint Sundry Company in California. He purchased a fifth-wheel travel trailer and began traveling full time. As a subscriber to *Workamper News* magazine, Fisher learned about volunteer opportunities with the Service and landed his first volunteer job at Bosque del Apache NWR in Socorro, New Mexico.

Since that first refuge experience, he has worked at Reelfoot NWR in Tennessee, Ash Meadows NWR in Nevada, Ouray NWR in Utah, Buenos Aires NWR in Arizona, and at Okefenokee refuge in Folkston, Georgia.

Most refuges at which Fisher has volunteered require 32 hours of volunteer service in exchange for trailer hookups, propane and other amenities while camping. He often donates much more than the required amount of time to fill in for other volunteers or complete a project.

More than 1,500 hours of Fisher's volunteer time has been at Okefenokee NWR; he is currently in his second trip to Okefenokee after working for five months in 1997 and 1998. He has spent many hours stripping and repainting facilities, and painting and installing signs. One of his favorite jobs, Fisher says, is hopping on the lawn mower and mowing or picking up pine cones and pine straw.

He also helps with grounds maintenance at Banks Lake NWR in Lakeland, Georgia—yet another refuge that has benefitted from Peter Fisher's seemingly limitless energy and enthusiasm.

Gracie Gooch, Okefenokee NWR, Folkston, Georgia

Whooping Crane Recovery Making Progress

In 1941, a group of just fifteen whooping cranes took wing across the Central Flyway, a migratory route stretching from the prairie provinces of Canada to the Gulf Coast of Texas—the same migratory route their innumerable ancestors had followed for centuries.

These few birds were the very last of their species, survivors of threats such as being shot at and having their nesting areas drained for agricultural use. From this tiny flock, the nearly extinct species has been slowly but steadily recovering thanks to efforts by the Service and its partners. Today, two main populations of whooping cranes exist, with 282 birds in the wild and 105 birds in captivity, making a total of 387 birds.

The backbone of recovery efforts has been the Aransas/Wood Buffalo flock, according to Tom Stehn, the Service's national whooping crane recovery coordinator.

This flock is named for the 2,500-mile sojourn it makes each April from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf of Mexico to Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Direct descendants of the original fifteen, the birds typically depart in pairs or small family groups for their northward migration.

"This particular flock has been making considerable progress, growing in numbers at around four percent annually, and now at a record one hundred eighty-eight," Stehn said.

Another significant whooper group is the non-migratory flock in Florida, which currently consists of 91 birds. Since 1993, between 20 and 30 juvenile whooping cranes have been raised annually in captivity and soft-released onto the Kissimmee Prairie of central Florida. These birds are raised by handlers wearing crane costumes so that the birds remain afraid of people and learn the right behaviors to enable them to survive in the wild.



Coming along nicely. *Captive bred whooping cranes—like this one at Patuxent NWR in Maryland—are part of a continuing successful effort to recover whooping cranes. FWS photo: Karen Hollingsworth.*

Whooping crane pairs in the Kissimmee Prairie flock have laid eggs and biologists hoped that the first chick of the non-migratory flock would hatch this spring. Bobcat predation remains the primary threat to this population, Stehn said.

Recovery biologists plan to introduce a third flock of whooping cranes into the wild. An ultralight aircraft will give the birds their first lesson in migration; once cranes are taught a migration pattern, they will follow the same route for the rest of their lives.

Stehn said he anticipates that the birds will summer at Necedah NWR in central Wisconsin and winter at Chassahowitzka NWR on the west coast of Florida.

Biologists are hopeful that a migratory flock of about 125 whooping cranes can be established in the next 12 years. Establishment of an eastern migratory flock and the Florida non-migratory flock would fully meet recovery goals of creating two additional self-sustaining flocks, each with 25 nesting pairs, that would allow the species to be downlisted, Stehn said.

Ben Ikenson, External Affairs, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Getting Things Done at Forsythe NWR

The motto of the nationwide volunteer service program AmeriCorps is "Getting Things Done." At Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in Oceanville, New Jersey, a dedicated group of AmeriCorps volunteers has been getting a number of things done, from bird banding to trail-building—and even acting.

Run with a grant from the Atlantic/Cape May Career Center and the Corporation for National Service, the Forsythe AmeriCorps program has provided the refuge with dozens of volunteers since 1997. A refuge employee serves as group leader for volunteers from various backgrounds.

While many members of the Forsythe AmeriCorps crew have science backgrounds, some joined the program simply because they wanted to make a difference in their community while taking a break from school or a regular job for a year or two.

Currently 18 volunteers serve at Forsythe, including Greg Barna, who enjoyed it so much the first time that he signed up for a second term of service at the coastal New Jersey refuge.

"It's wonderful having a job I enjoy coming to every day," he said. "I came here often to visit before I joined AmeriCorps, and I welcomed the chance to help out."

While some time is spent on community service and training, most of the volunteers' hours are spent assisting refuge staff. The help has not gone unappreciated.

"Since the AmeriCorps program came to the refuge, the members have accomplished so many projects, including some I only dreamed of doing," said Deputy Project Leader Tracy Casselman. "They have not only started and completed tangible things, but they have been a breath of fresh air into this organization."

With the assistance of refuge volunteer coordinator Sandy Perchetti, some AmeriCorps members created and performed a puppet show starring animals found on the refuge. Appropriately called "At the Refuge," the show describes the importance of protecting the environment.

Getting Things Done at Forsythe NWR (continued)



Suited up. Tracy Casselman (right) assists AmeriCorps volunteer Greg Barna as he prepares to perform as “T.R. Bear.” FWS photo.

After seeing how much the group liked to perform, Perchetti realized her volunteer crew could be counted on to dress up in a Teddy Roosevelt Bear mascot costume and greet children at various events. It has been used as an outreach tool at Forsythe’s National Wildlife Refuge Day celebration, local nursing homes and schools—another example of how these industrious volunteers are “getting things done.”

Cindy Heffley, Edwin B. Forsythe NWR, Oceanville, New Jersey

Earth Stewards: Biologists for the Next Generation?

Recently, eighty fifth graders had the field trip experience of their young lives at Ion Swamp in South Carolina’s Francis Marion National Forest as participants in the Sewee Earth Stewards Program, a hands-on approach to conservation education.

Earth Stewards is conducted on Service lands or at nearby wildlife management areas and supported through partnerships with nearby schools, conservation agencies and local businesses. Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge in eastern South Carolina has partnered with the Francis Marion National Forest, the South Carolina Center for Birds of Prey, and Sewee Cooperating Association, which supports the refuge and the forest, to provide an intense environmental education program for fifth graders at two local schools.

The nine-week Sewee Earth Stewards program is dedicated to the study of freshwater wetlands. Two days a week, participating students see presentations on wetland topics such as raptors, snakes and wetland plants.

“The goal of the program is to increase students’ understanding of freshwater wetlands and their functions, using as models the wetlands of the refuge and forest,” said Karen Beshears, executive director of the Sewee Cooperating Association.

In addition to the classroom studies, field trips to nearby wetlands play a key role in the program. The Earth Stewards students have visited former rice fields that are now thriving wetland habitats for animals and plants. A recent visit to the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center gave the students the opportunity get “up close and personal” with species such as red wolves, which once roamed South Carolina’s low country.

The culmination of the Sewee Earth Stewards Program was the trip to Ion Swamp. Activities included water sampling and a trail activity on camouflage. The highlight of the day was a canoe trip through the swamp. Students paddled to wood duck nesting boxes and recorded activity on official South Carolina Department of Natural Resource forms, then cleaned the boxes of old nesting material and left cedar shavings for the next nesting season.

“This activity will certainly continue to be one of our on-going Earth Stewards projects,” Beshears said. “It not only provides the students with the opportunity to canoe and have fun, but also an actual project which they can take pride in and say they helped wildlife.”

This is the second year that Cape Romain Refuge has been part of the Earth Stewards Program and “certainly without the cooperation of all of our partners we would not have the successful program which we now have,” said Beshears.

“To see the smiles on these kids’ faces and feel their appreciation makes all of us involved with Earth Stewards know that our efforts have not been in vain,” she said.

Larry Davis, Cape Romain NWR, Awendaw, South Carolina

Where to Go Online—and Off—for Publications

The conservation library at the National Conservation Training Center is rapidly becoming the place to start a search for most any Service publication—on paper or on the Internet. Located in the Commons building at the West Virginia training center, the library has already amassed a large collection of printed brochures and reports of interest to people in the conservation field, and it is undertaking a major effort to post as many Service publications as possible on the Web.

The Service's Publications Unit, also located at NCTC and supported by regional units, is still the place to go for quantities of current Service publications such as brochures, fact sheets and annual reports. However, the conservation library is fast becoming the place to find those "hard-to-get" products.

Despite the large number of printed materials available, the conservation library is no old-fashioned archive of musty yellow papers. It is a high-tech operation, managing information stored on videotapes, CD-ROM's and a wide variety of other electronic and digital media.

Wander into the cozy library and conservation librarian Anne Roy can still show you field station brochures, the *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*, a report on *Contaminants in Redhead Ducks Wintering in Baffin Bay and Redfish Bay, Texas*, or one of hundreds of other Service products. In addition to these publications, many valuable but unpublished scientific reports have a home in the conservation library.

Roy said that NCTC has begun to scan old documents so they may be viewed on the Internet 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The library serves as a one-stop—rather than one-stop—shopping resource, launching users into cyberspace, where they may end up accessing a computer far from West Virginia and the conservation library when they find what they are looking for.

Roy emphasized that many old documents are still only available in paper or Mylar format—but the number of items available electronically continues to grow.

Service employees also have access to a wide range of scientific abstracts and databases through the agency's trial subscription to Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (see article, page 9).

The conservation library is not focusing solely on posting existing documents to the Internet. New acquisitions are arriving every day thanks in part to donations from current and retired Service employees.

The conservation library catalog is available on the Internet and Roy provides copies of her catalog records to the Online Computer Library Center, the clearinghouse for libraries nationwide, which advertises Service materials and facilitates distribution through traditional channels as well as the Internet.

"This is truly a work in progress, a new effort to create a new collection of materials that is both digital and paper," Roy said. "Our hope is to one day have all older Service publications in digital format so that they are made available via the Internet and searchable along with current Service documents that are online."

Don't take our word for it...check it out yourself. Start at the easy-to-remember <http://library.fws.gov> Web site and follow the links to the conservation library catalog. For newer publications, remember to start your search at the Publications Unit's Publications Clearinghouse, on the Web at <http://training.fws.gov/library/pubunit.html> or by phone at 304/876 7203.

Are the publications, reports, maps and other products your office issues included yet in the catalog? If your office has materials that should be made available to others through a library, contact Anne Roy at library@fws.gov or by phone at 304/876 7399 to determine how your publications and other literature can be incorporated.

*Charlie Grymes, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Cross-Regional Exchange Benefits Black Bears



Success. Wildlife biologist Mark Bertram locates the den tree of a female black bear on the Tensas River NWR. Bertram was detailed to Tensas River refuge as part of a cross-regional exchange to assist with bear monitoring. FWS photo: Don Anderson.

Don Anderson of Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge in Region 4 and Mark Bertram from Alaska's Yukon Flats NWR live about as far apart as the range of the black bears they study. Far-reaching research recently brought these two wildlife biologists from opposite sides of the country together to try to boost black bear populations.

The American black bear is the most widespread species of bear in North America. Found on many national wildlife refuges, the black bear ranges from the hardwoods of the southeastern United States to coniferous forests in Alaska. Anderson is working to restore the federally threatened Louisiana black bear subspecies in part of its historic range in the Southeast. Bertram is monitoring black bear demographics on the 12 million-acre Yukon Flats NWR in interior Alaska.

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Cross-Regional Exchange Benefits Black Bears

(continued)

Anderson initiated an exchange between the two biologists in June 1999 when he visited both the Yukon Flats and the Kenai refuges in Alaska. While at Yukon Flats, Anderson assisted with aerial bear telemetry relocations, an ongoing calf moose capture operation and songbird banding. He also aided wolf and lynx trapping and songbird point counts at the Kenai Refuge. Bertram reciprocated with a visit to Tensas River refuge in February 2000, during which he helped monitor the reproductive status of denning adult female bears.

Both agree that these exchanges are worth the time and money. Biologist exchanges have been highlighted in the "Biological Needs Assessment" and "Fulfilling the Promise" documents produced by the Division of Refuges. These documents not only lay the groundwork for the landmark National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, but also provide refuge biologists with a means to promote biological cross-regional exchanges.

"It is like a hands-on meeting," said Anderson. "Working with other biologists across regions is an excellent way to network as well as provide needed field help and expertise."

Bertram agreed.

"Having spent my entire career in Alaska, this was a real learning experience. It was a great opportunity to learn about the biological program at Tensas River refuge, visit with their staff and learn more about a very different geographic area," he said. "And we both found ways to enhance the bear monitoring programs at each of our stations."

*Yukon Flats NWR,
Fairbanks, Alaska*

Outreach in Action



Get the word out. Refuge biologist Joyce Kleen talks to a visitor at the Florida state fair. FWS photo: Shawn Gillette.

This year's Florida State Fair in Tampa saw a record 500,000 visitors, according to fair officials, many of whom visited the Wild Things booth to learn more about the Service and its activities in Florida.

The Service's popular display at the fair came about after a 1997 Region Four Public Use Workshop meeting. Refuge ranger Eileen Nuñez of Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge spearheaded a group of Florida field station staff which put together a proposal for entry into this high profile annual event.

Nuñez's sub-committee developed a list of criteria for the exhibit, including:

- Showcase the Service as a whole, highlighting aspects of all the Service's programs.

- Incorporate interactive learning activities emphasizing how the Service's work benefits the American public.

- Reflect a team effort on the design, construction and staffing.

In July 1998, state fair officials approved the Service's application for participation, and shortly thereafter, the exhibit was approved and a budget was allocated. Nuñez and her group began designing the exhibit based on their criteria.

Frank Podriznik of the Atlanta Regional office assisted, creating construction blueprints, which volunteers from St. Marks and Crystal River refuges used to build the exhibit. Others contributed artwork and a wetlands diorama.

The fair ran for eleven days in February. Twenty Service employees representing the divisions of Refuges, Law Enforcement and Ecological Services in Florida, along with ten Service volunteers, staffed the exhibit booth.

The Wild Things booth was a smashing success. Service staff and volunteers interacted with visitors from all over the state and the country. At the height of visitation during the final weekend of the fair, the exhibit saw between twenty and thirty visitors per hour.

*Shawn Gillette, St. Marks NWR,
St. Marks, Florida*

Deliberate Acts of Outreach

*Caught Red-handed and Dutifully
Reported by Anita Noguera,
National Outreach Coordinator*

If you feel out of touch with the latest methods of communication—namely the Service’s Internal Internet (the SII or “Intranet”) and e-mail listservs, help is on the way. Sit back, relax and let’s take some of the mystery out of these two useful information and outreach tools.

What is the SII?

On the Internet, you can reach anywhere in the world, gather information, make a purchase, send images, or do a hundred other things. The SII is just like the Internet, but its scope is internal to the Service, helping to make Service data readily accessible to all employees so they can work together on draft proposals without prematurely exposing the work-in-progress to the public or forcing the public to navigate through internal administrative information.

Here are just a few practical uses for the SII...

- Post a document draft on the SII and select Service colleagues to comment and offer suggestions before releasing the final version.

- Coordinate a meeting with Service folks across the nation. Give employees from the other side of the country an advance view of what the meeting will be about so they can offer changes as needed.

- Provide a consistent central reference and storage area for team charters, meeting notes, archival information, forms, event calendars, and standard procedures, including graphic images, and video and audio clips.

The SII uses the same text format language as the Internet, called “HTML” or hypertext markup language. Creating text for the SII is the same as creating it for the World Wide Web.

To visit the SII, load your web browser and at the address line and type **http://sii.fws.gov**. Take a moment and click on “FAQs,” where you will find answers to a number of frequently asked questions. Don’t forget to visit the Outreach site for the latest information about Service internal and external communication activities at **http://sii.fws.gov/outreach**.

What is a listserv?

Listserv is a system for creating, managing and controlling electronic mailing lists of names and addresses used to send messages or announcements to a group of people with common interests. Unlike traditional mail, you can usually join and leave a listserv list as you like, so there is a good chance that you will actually find at least some of the messages interesting. In fact, subscribing to these lists is more like joining a club or subscribing to a magazine.

We have ten or more active listservs in the Service. One of them is the FWS-Outreach listserv, created to facilitate discussions among the many people dealing with outreach. Everyone interested in outreach and inreach in the Service is invited to subscribe. Even if you’re not directly involved in outreach, you can join to see what’s going on.

Subscribers to the FWS-Outreach listserv:

- coordinate meetings, conference calls and events;
- provide assistance to resolve situational questions (“how do I...”);
- comment on what’s working (or not) regarding the agency approach to outreach;
- discuss how new technology, budgets and policies will affect outreach; and
- cover other topics relevant to a broad audience of folks involved with outreach.

Another listserv, FWS-News, reaches not only Service personnel but many local and national news outlets and independent writers who want to read the latest Service news releases.

You can check the Web publishing site on the SII for details about how to use listservs. Here’s a basic rundown on how to subscribe to most any Service listserv; these instructions use the FWS-Outreach listserv as an example.

To Subscribe/Unsubscribe

To subscribe to the listserv via e-mail, click on “New Memo” and then:

1. After “To,” type **listserv@www.fws.gov**.
2. Leave the “Subject” line blank.
3. In the body of the message, type **subscribe fws-outreach Your Name**. (For example, **subscribe fws-outreach Jane Doe**)
4. Click on “Send.”

To unsubscribe to a listserv, follow steps 1 through 4 above, but instead of typing **subscribe fws-outreach Your Name**, type **unsubscribe fws-outreach Your Name**.

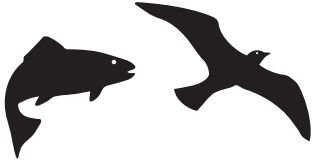
To Send Messages

To send a message via e-mail, click on “New Memo” and then:

1. After “To:” type, **fws-outreach@www.fws.gov**.
2. Fill in the Subject line and the body of the message as you normally would.

As you can see, using the SII and listservs is not so mysterious and once you get the hang of it...they’re pretty useful! Start using these wonderful tools today!

Ecosystem Approach Initiatives



Texas Gulf Coast Teems with Wildlife, Habitat, Energy

Calvin Klein's "Obsession" attracts the endangered ocelot. That's what experiments at the Dallas Zoo uncovered and since then, at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge on the southern tip of the Texas Gulf Coast, refuge staff have been using the men's cologne in attempts to trap and monitor the behavior of this elusive cat.

Up the coast, the only existing flock of migratory whooping cranes winters at Aransas NWR, where prairie habitat is specifically managed for this endangered bird.

Further north, at Anahuac NWR, large-scale efforts to control highly invasive Chinese tallow, an exotic woody plant, have facilitated restoration of native habitat such as coastal prairie and freshwater marsh.

Although the activities at these Texas refuges are varied, together they make up the efforts of a united goal: restoring the Texas Gulf Coast, a unique and vital ecosystem between the mouth of the Rio Grande and the Sabine River, a natural border between Texas and Louisiana.



It's an "obsession." *Biologists on the Texas Gulf Coast discovered that a men's fragrance attracts endangered ocelots. FWS photo.*

Needless to say, the Texas Gulf Coast Ecosystem Team, a coalition of Service employees dedicated to protecting the region from threats including agricultural fragmentation and urban development, has a lot on its plate. Members represent 12 national wildlife refuges, two ecological services offices, four law enforcement offices and a North American Waterfowl Management Plan project office.

Collectively, the ecosystem boasts an impressive diversity of habitat: vast expanses of coastal prairie; small depressional wetlands; tidal coastal marshes; isolated and transitional fresh and intermediate marshes; bays and lagunas supporting extensive seagrass beds, tidal flats and reef complexes; barrier islands; and forested riparian corridors, mottes and dense brushy habitat.

These habitats are essential to a wide variety of fish and wildlife, including neotropical migratory birds, marine industry seafood species, at least 14 threatened and endangered species, and more than 30 species of concern.

Last March, the team met to discuss a number of strategies, from meshing the budget process with ecosystem-based project initiatives to increasing stakeholder involvement and partnership, including plans to bring stakeholders to meetings and listen to their perspectives on ecosystem conservation.

Appropriately, the two-day brainstorming session was held at the Nature Conservancy's Coastal Prairie Preserve, where biologists from the conservation group gave presentations and discussed mutually relevant conservation issues.

The team has undertaken a number of other activities, as well. At Laguna Atascosa, a remote microphone recording system has been installed to survey and capture the calls of nighttime migratory birds. A Web site displays the number of recorded calls of the distinctive dickcissel.

Another bird of distinction enjoys special treatment at Aransas refuge, where biologists are creating artificial nests for Aplomado falcon eggs and raising the chicks until they can be safely released to the wild.

"We are also trying to increase our outreach efforts via pamphlets, educational programs, and media coverage," said Carlos Mendoza, who was elected this year's single point of contact for the team and who arranged the meeting. "Our discussions dealt with how best do we use the Information and Education people we now have to do this."

The Texas Gulf Coast Ecosystem Team was first organized in May 1994 following a Southwest region project leaders meeting to introduce the Ecosystem Approach to Resource Management. Before completing and distributing an initial ecosystem plan, the team conducted open house-style public meetings to solicit input in determining natural resource priorities within the ecosystem area.

*Ben Ikenson, External Affairs,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

Exploring Our Past



Unusual Weapon Finds Its Way to Museum

One of the newest acquisitions at the Service's museum in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, is arguably one of the most unusual firearms ever held by a Service law enforcement agent. Transferred to the museum from the Division of Law Enforcement Training Division in Glynco, Georgia, the 17-inch snake gun is now illegal to possess. However, snake guns were once widely used to shoot... well, snakes, among other things.



New acquisition. *This vintage snake gun has a new home at the Service's museum archives. FWS photo.*

The snake gun is a small shotgun that was manufactured by the Harrington and Richardson Arms Company (since replaced by the New England Firearms Company), which called it the "Handy Gun." It is a .410 gauge shotgun with a 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch barrel. The snake gun is unique because it is small and portable like a handgun, but fires shot, making it easier to hit small, moving targets such as snakes.

As Special Agent Roderick Thornton pointed out, "Do you know how hard it is to hit a moving snake?"

Today, it is illegal for an individual to possess a non-grandfathered Handy Gun because of the length of the barrel in relation to its stature as a shotgun. By law, a shotgun must have a smoothbore barrel at least

18 inches in length or a rifled barrel more than 16 inches in length. According to the Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, only "licensed collectors may acquire, hold, or dispose of [Handy Guns] as curios or relics..."

The snake gun at the museum has an attractive striped frame and a striped wooden stock. It had been confiscated in a law enforcement action and seemed to be a fine firearm example for the Service's museum, which has numerous old and special firearms donated by the Division of Law Enforcement.

Jeanne M. Harold, National Conservation Training Center, Shepherdstown, West Virginia

Fish & Wildlife Honors...

Two Nominated by Service for "Legend" Awards

Bonnie Strawser and Skippy Reeves, both from Region 4, were nominated to receive the Legend Award from the American Recreation Coalition. The Legend Award recognizes individuals in conservation agencies who have made significant contributions to the enhancement of outdoor recreation. Strawser, an interpretive specialist at Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges in North Carolina, was cited for 21 years of exemplary service, including establishing a refuge support group, opening a visitor center at Pea Island, and improving public access to both refuges. Reeves, manager at Okefenokee NWR in Georgia, has led efforts to improve facilities and opportunities for some 400,000 people who visit the refuge each year.

Rhode Island Receives Service Civil Rights Award

At a ceremony in March, Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Almond accepted the Director's 1999 National Civil Rights Award for his state's initiative in designing and constructing four disabled-accessible boat launch facilities around Narragansett Bay. Funding for the facilities was provided by a Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration grant, as well as local and state monies. The Region 5 Office for Civil Rights and Diversity nominated the state for the award.

Interior Award Goes to Alaska Officer

The Department of the Interior and the Service in April presented Walter E. Soroka, Jr., deputy assistant regional director for law enforcement in Alaska, with a Citation for Meritorious Service in recognition of his outstanding contributions in the Service's Law Enforcement program during the past 23 years, including his experience and expertise as a pilot, and his outstanding skill as a supervisor. Since 1976, Soroka has initiated several investigations that have successfully curtailed illegal activities severely harming fish and wildlife resources. He opened the first Service Law Enforcement office on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula, and there led a long-term undercover operation that led to the breakup of illegal activities of hunting guides and commercial dealers who were exploiting Alaska's big game.

Raffaelle Recognized for Bird Research

The Association of Field Ornithologists presented Herbert Raffaelle, chief of the Office of International Affairs, with its 1999 Alexander F. Skutch Medal for Excellence in Neotropical Ornithology last October. Raffaelle, only the second recipient of this award, was recognized for his many contributions to the field of ornithology, including research, education, public awareness and natural resource conservation. He has co-authored several books, including *A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies*, which the association called "a new model for a field guide" and includes conservation information written from a local point of view. Raffaelle also wrote *Guide to the Birds of Puerto Rico*, which has been translated into Spanish.

Agent Honored for Contributions to Conservation

Special Agent Robert Douglas Goessman of the Division of Law Enforcement in Bozeman, Montana, received the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's 2000 Guy Bradley Award. The award, which honors outstanding wildlife law enforcement officers, was presented to Goessman and Sergeant Charles Beatty of the Alaska Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Chicago in March. Goessman was recognized for his accomplishments both as a criminal investigator and wildlife law enforcement instructor. His 22-year career in wildlife law enforcement includes eight years as a wildlife conservation officer with the state of Illinois; service as a special agent in Georgia, Minnesota and Montana; and a four-year tour of duty as a senior Service instructor at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia. Goessman's recent investigative work helped uncover the activities of an organized wildlife crime syndicate operating out of Kenya; wildlife enforcement officers there seized a collection of contraband wildlife items valued at as much as \$3 million and have charged the main suspect in the case with multiple counts of wildlife trafficking.

Transitions...Who's Coming and Going

Brian T. Kelly is the new Mexican Gray Wolf Recovery Coordinator stationed in the Southwest regional office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Kelly formerly served as the coordinator for the Service's Red Wolf Reintroduction Program in North Carolina. He brings nearly 20 years of experience on the research and management of coyotes, foxes, and wolves to the program.

The new manager at Pond Creek NWR in Arkansas is **Michael Johnson**. Previously manager at Harris Neck, Blackbeard Island and Wolf Island refuges of the Savannah Coastal Refuge complex in Georgia, Johnson took over at Pond Creek in early March. Johnson, an 11-year Service veteran, has served as assistant refuge manager at Cache River in Augusta, Arkansas.

The Service selected **Kofi Fynn-Aikins** for the position of project leader at the Amherst, New York, Lower Great Lakes Fishery Resources Office. Fynn-Aikins had served for a year as acting project leader at the fishery resources office. The Amherst office also oversees the Allegheny National Fish Hatchery in Warren, Pennsylvania, which is a primary source of fish for lake trout restoration in Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

Thomas Dean Rhine is the new project leader for White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery in West Virginia. Rhine will work with federal, state and local programs focused on conserving and restoring fish and mussel populations in the Ohio River watershed. Rhine comes to the Service from the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, where he has served as a senior fishery research biologist since 1993.

The new manager at Delaware's Prime Hook NWR is **Barry G. Brady**, who formerly managed three national wildlife refuges in Virginia—Presquille, James River and Rappahannock River Valley refuges. Brady previously managed national wildlife refuges in Hawaii and Nevada. He began his career with the Service in 1977 as a refuge manager trainee at Montezuma NWR in Seneca Falls, New York.

Former Chief of the Division of Federal Aid **Bob Lange** has taken a position with the U.S. Forest Service as the agency's director for national partnerships. In his new position,

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Lange will coordinate and execute the Forest Service's partnerships with government and non-government organizations, private and public foundations, and other conservation-oriented groups.

The Service has named **Bill Schaff**, formerly manager of Kirwin NWR in Kansas, as the new manager of the Innoko refuge, located 300 miles northwest of Anchorage, Alaska, in the central Yukon River Valley. Schaff has been with the Service for more than 20 years, working first at San Luis NWR in central California with the Young Adult Conservation Corps program.

In Memoriam

David L. Spencer, who was highly instrumental in the establishment and management of national wildlife refuges in Alaska, passed away February 9. Spencer was active and influential in managing and conserving refuge lands in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s in Alaska. He was regional refuge supervisor from 1950 until his retirement in 1976, and is recognized for his leadership role in guiding the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge System in Alaska. His achievements and contributions to the refuge system were commemorated in 1997 when the Canoe Lakes Unit of the Kenai Wilderness was renamed the Dave Spencer Unit.

Service employee **Lloyd Smith, Jr.**, 36, and his wife Rhonda died May 21 in a house fire at Quinalt National Fish Hatchery in Washington State. The fire was reported by a hatchery worker, who awoke to find the nearby residence engulfed in flames. Quinalt tribal firefighters responded but were unable to extinguish the fire. The home was equipped with two fire alarms that were inspected in December 1999. The cause of the fire is unknown. Because the hatchery is a federal facility and located on a tribal reservation, the FBI is investigating with the help of tribal police. No one else was injured and no other buildings were damaged at the 35-year-old salmon hatchery. Smith had been employed at Quinalt for nearly a decade and was the grandson of Phil Martin, a former hatchery manager. The News will publish further information on Smith in an upcoming issue.

Secretary Babbitt Hails Refuges

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt attended the annual strategy session of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, or CARE group, held in March at the Main Interior Building in Washington, D.C. Babbitt thanked CARE for its continuing efforts and offered his views on the refuge system, saying that refuges are important to the future of conservation and at their best are a "generative and radiant force" in respect to their influence across the landscape.

Volunteers Needed for Boy Scouts

2001 Jamboree

Planning is already well under way for the Boy Scouts of America's 2001 Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill in northern Virginia, and as in past years, the Service will be an active partner in the sellout event. Service employees from all regions are needed to help staff Service displays and activities during the event. Thousands of scouts, volunteers and visitors will converge on Fort A.P. Hill July 23–August 1, 2001, for an event that offers a unique opportunity for the Service to provide information about its activities. Contact interim Boy Scout coordinator Randy Rutan at the National Conservation Training Center (304/876 7495) or your regional scouting coordinator for more information about the 2001 Boy Scout Jamboree.

Condor Recovery Marks Milestone

After more than a decade in captivity, the last female California condor taken into captivity was released to the wild in April. Adult condor #8 was released to the Sespe wilderness area in California where she was born more than 25 years ago, marking the first time a wild-born condor has been set free since the last wild California condors were captured in the 1980s to save the species from extinction. In 1982, the condor population reached its lowest level of 22 birds after decades of significant decline, prompting Service biologists to start collecting condor chicks and eggs for a captive breeding program. The April release of adult condor #8 and the two juveniles brings the total number of California condors in the wild up to 60, with 95 remaining in captivity.

Wetlands Grant Guidelines on the 'Net

Individuals and organizations seeking funding for on-the-ground wetlands restoration, management, or enhancement projects to benefit wildlife can now access standard grant instructions for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act over the Internet at <http://northamerican.fws.gov/nawcahp.html>. To date, more than \$320 million in grants have been awarded to more than 900 partners for 731 projects in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Partners in these wetlands conservation projects contributed \$817 million. The funding cap for a Standard Grant is \$1 million. The Service administers the grant program; however, projects are selected by the North American Wetlands Conservation Council. The council is made up of nine members: the director of the Service, the executive secretary of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, four directors of state fish and wildlife agencies, one from each migratory bird flyway; and three individuals representing nonprofit organizations that are actively carrying out wetlands conservation projects.

Sea Otter Killing Leads to Reward Offer

With the help of four partner organizations, the Service's Division of Law Enforcement has offered a \$12,500 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons who shot and killed a southern sea otter along the central California coast in April. The initial reward amount was \$2,500. However, Friends of the Sea Otter, Defenders of Wildlife, the Humane Society of the United States, and the Center for Marine Conservation each pledged \$2,500, and the Service increased its reward amount to \$2,500 through the Endangered Species Act Reward Fund. Southern sea otters are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and also are protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Killing a species protected by these laws could result in fines of up to \$10,000 for each law violated.

Moving Forward

Change isn't easy. For that reason, the Directorate considered long and hard the decision to reorganize the regional offices. In the end, we decided to do it for one simple reason: our employees told us it was necessary.

Across the nation, at all levels of the agency, employees voiced the need to simplify the organizational structure. In addition, the Ecosystem Approach Implementation Team recommended to the Directorate that change may be in order. Based on the I-Team's efforts, the Deputies Team surveyed employees (see page 2). At the same time, though, we heard tremendous support from employees for the ecosystem approach and the work of the ecosystem teams. Our goal, then, became how to address employee concerns about complexity while preserving the best aspects of the ecosystem approach.

It is clear that, as an agency, we have made tremendous progress on improving our communication across programs. Many of us also feel that the GARD/PARD structure greatly enhanced the Service's ability to address complex resource issues that involve multiple Service programs. We were looking for this type of progress when we created the GARD/PARD structure, and we must maintain that momentum.

At the same time, it was clear the organization wasn't working for many employees. Management experts call systems like the GARD/PARD structure "matrix management"—and we know that such systems require more effort to maintain effective coordination. In the Fish and Wildlife Service, we have a relatively small work force with a large and complex mission—93 million acres of land, many physical facilities, and significant regulatory and conservation responsibilities both on and off Service lands. Our work force is already stressed—and the extra effort required to

maintain a matrix management structure simply did not work for us.

As we contemplated this reorganization, we had two concerns—how to move the agency forward and how to minimize the impact on affected employees, many of whom represent our next generation of leaders. For that reason, we made sure that our personnel office was closely involved in the decision-making process from the very start. The Service is a family, and as a family we will look out for the welfare of individuals as well as the needs of the family unit.

By now you know the details of the reorganization, but I would like to say a word about the positions of special assistant to the regional director for ecosystems. These positions have been modeled after successful positions now existing in some of our regions—and we see them as critically important. They will stay in close touch with the needs of the ecosystem teams and serve as their advocates at the highest levels in each of the regions. They will also work with the assistant regional directors to continue to foster cross-program collaboration and carry out the ecosystem approach, and network back with the special assistant for ecosystems who reports to the Director in Washington.

At the time the Directorate discussed the regional office reorganization, we also had other organizational needs on the table. Among them was the need to prepare the National Wildlife Refuge System for its centennial celebration and give the refuge system the management attention and focus it deserves. In recent months I have met with refuge employees and stakeholders on several occasions, and I have listened carefully to their issues and concerns about the future of our land base. The time has indeed come for us to raise the visibility and stature of the refuge system.

Furthermore, we need to elevate the importance of our partnership with state agencies for two critical programs—migratory birds and Federal Aid. The positions of assistant regional director for migratory birds and state programs will bring attention to our efforts to strengthen our Federal Aid program and to carry out comprehensive, nationwide undertakings like the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

As we implement this reorganization, we should be proud of the way we have gone about it. All of us, for instance, can be proud of the Deputies Team report. For the first time, we used computer technology to pioneer an innovative management tool that brought us all together.

Likewise, our GARDs and PARDs have every right to be proud of their success in improving cross-program collaboration and strengthening management and responsiveness to complex resource issues. Now, we are building on these experiences. I want to thank all the employees who participated in this process. We listened, and you have my commitment that we will continue to listen as we move ahead to implement the regional plans for handling the reorganization.



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