



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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President Clinton Signs First Organic Law for National Wildlife Refuge System

President Clinton signed the first ever organic law for the National Wildlife Refuge System on Oct. 9 at a ceremony in the Oval Office.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 formally establishes fish, wildlife, and plant conservation as the mission of the world's largest network of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife. The new law also gives priority to certain wildlife-dependent recreational uses of national wildlife refuges.

For nearly a century, the Service has managed the refuge system under a variety of laws without a comprehensive law spelling out how it ought to be managed and used by the public. The law signed by President Clinton resolves these key issues, which have grown more complex as the system expanded and visitation increased to nearly 30 million people a year.

"This legislation marks a milestone in the National Wildlife Refuge System's history by making wildlife conservation its overarching mission and ensuring sportsmen, birdwatchers, and other wildlife enthusiasts ample opportunities to enjoy this magnificent collection of wild lands," said Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt.

Babbitt personally participated in the development of the legislation, working with Congressional sponsors Representatives Don Young of Alaska and John Dingell of

Michigan, and leaders of key sportsmen's and environmental organizations.

Other congressmen who were instrumental in building overwhelming bipartisan support for the bill were Representatives George Miller of California, John Tanner of Tennessee, Jim Saxton of New Jersey, and Neil Abercrombie of Ohio. Senators John Chafee of Rhode Island, Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho, Bob Graham of Florida, and Max Baucus of Montana were key supporters in the Senate.

Representatives of sportsmen's and environmental groups who were key players in the legislation's development were Dan Beard, senior vice president of the National Audubon Society; Rollin Sparrowe, president of the Wildlife Management Institute; Bill Horn, legislative director for the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America; and Max Peterson, executive vice president of the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

"This is truly historic conservation legislation," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark. "The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service now has a clear, unifying law to help ensure a vibrant National Wildlife Refuge System. Managing this system of federal lands for conservation will help ensure healthy and abundant populations of wildlife for future generations of Americans to enjoy."

*Janet Tennyson, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



On the Cover:

An historic moment

President Clinton signs the first-ever organic law for managing the National Wildlife Refuge System as key congressional members and Service personnel look on. Standing behind the President, left to right: Sen. John Chafee of Rhode Island; Sen. Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho; Sen. John Breaux of Louisiana; Rep. Don Young of Alaska; Paul Hansen, executive director of the Izaak Walton League of America; Rep. Jim Saxton of New Jersey; Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark; Don Barry, acting assistant interior secretary for fish and wildlife and parks; Rep. John Dingell of Michigan; Assistant Director-External Affairs Dan Ashe (partially hidden); Rep. John Tanner of Tennessee; Rollie Sparrowe, president of the Wildlife Management Institute; and Sen. Bob Graham of Florida. White House photo.

Key Provisions of the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act

- Defines the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, which is "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to ensure the biological integrity, diversity, and environmental health of the National Wildlife Refuge System are maintained.

- Defines compatible wildlife-dependent recreation as "legitimate and appropriate general public use of the [National Wildlife Refuge] System." It establishes hunting, fishing, wildlife observation and photography, and environmental education and interpretation as "priority public uses" where compatible with the mission and purpose of individual national wildlife refuges.

- Retains refuge managers' authority to use sound professional judgment in determining compatible public uses on national wildlife refuges and whether or not they will be allowed. It establishes a formal process for determining "compatible use."

- Requires public involvement in decisions to allow new uses of national wildlife refuges and renew existing ones, as well as in the development of "comprehensive conservation plans" for national wildlife refuges. In addition, refuges that do not already have such plans are required to develop them.

A Blue Goose in the Oval Office

When I started with the Service as a GS-5 assistant manager at Malheur NWR, I never imagined that my career would include standing in the Oval Office watching the President sign a bill to guide the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System. But that is exactly what happened as I stood next to Secretary Babbitt, Acting Assistant Secretary Don Barry, Director Jamie Clark, Assistant Director Dan Ashe, many members of Congress, and various leaders in the conservation community.

As we waited in the White House reception room, the conversation of the senators, representatives, and leading conservationists (most of whom proudly displayed blue goose pins on their lapels) centered around the importance of our National Wildlife Refuge System and this country's natural resources. Finally the door to the Oval Office opened and there stood the President. As we shuffled in to meet him, I struggled with how to introduce myself. Quickly, I settled on something simple and to the point: "Hi, Mr. President. I'm Steve Thompson, Refuge Manager." He shook my hand and I filled with pride, knowing that I represented the 2,400 individuals who work so hard on our national wildlife refuges.

Perhaps not since President Teddy Roosevelt established the Refuge System in 1903 have we experienced such a flurry of activity. It took 94 years to build momentum, but everything came to a head within 24 hours: we received word of potential budget increases in the neighborhood of \$40 million; the division of refuges participated in a highly successful Refuge Week reception on Capitol Hill, hosted by Senator Kempthorne; and the President signed the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 in the Oval Office. I even received one of the ceremonial pens President Clinton used to sign the bill. (It will be framed with a red line copy of the bill and proudly displayed in the Chief's office.)

When Jamie, Dan and I approached President Clinton's desk for a closer look at the bill, we couldn't help notice his collection of various pins, buttons and knickknacks. Imagine our surprise when we surveyed the pins behind the President's desk and observed the blue goose lapel pin flying proudly.

The day's activities confirmed my conviction that these are, indeed, exciting and proud times to be representing the National Wildlife Refuge System and the Service.

*Steve Thompson, Refuges,
Washington, DC*



Warm greetings

Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark shakes hands with President Clinton prior to witnessing the signing of historic legislation on the National Wildlife Refuge System. Looking on, front to back, are Service Assistant Director-External Affairs Dan Ashe, Steve Thompson of the division of refuges and Duane Shroufe, president of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. White House photo.

Reauthorization of Endangered Species Act Moves Forward

Four key senators broke a five-year deadlock on reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act by introducing bipartisan legislation at a press conference attended by Secretary Babbitt in September.

Testifying before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in October, Director Jamie Rappaport Clark announced the administration's support of the bill, the "Endangered Species Recovery Act of 1997," introduced by Senators Chafee of Rhode Island, Baucus of Montana, Kempthorne of Idaho and Reid of Nevada.

The committee passed the bill by a vote of 15-3, sending it to the full Senate for consideration. Supporters are hopeful the Senate will pass the bill before it adjourns for the year in November.

In the House, Rep. George Miller of California introduced an ESA reauthorization bill that differs significantly from the Senate bill. No hearings have been held and the administration has not offered a position on the Miller bill.

Babbitt participated in discussions between the senators and the administration on the bill, and Service employees provided technical assistance to the senators and their staffs. The administration is confident this legislation will maintain the strengths of the current law while taking steps to make it work better for species conservation and affected landowners. In particular, the bill:

- codifies reforms made by the administration to improve species conservation and fairness to landowners;
- provides incentives for landowners to participate in conservation planning for endangered species;

- emphasizes recovery of species by requiring prompt completion of recovery plans and recovery goals based on "objective and measurable biological criteria;"

- encourages conservation plans that address multiple species;

- maintains the standard of listing species solely on the basis of biology and science;

- eliminates threats to species by allowing the Fish & Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to enter into conservation agreements for candidate species; and

- expands opportunities for public involvement.

At the same time, the bill does not contain language seen in past bills opposed by the administration including compensating private property owners for limitations on the use of their land due to the act's provisions.

The administration is concerned, however, that Congress provide adequate funding to implement the bill, which contains a number of provisions that will be costly to implement. The bill does authorize a doubling of the ESA budget for the Service and more than doubles the budget for the National Marine Fisheries Service. The bill is an authorization only, however, and the money must be provided under an appropriations bill.

*Cindy Hoffman, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*



Getting the word out

The service's Office of Public Affairs, through a wire service, distributed this graphic plus an article on the National Wildlife Refuge System and National Wildlife Refuge Week to 10,000 newspapers nationwide. In just a few months, the article and graphic have been placed in 140 newspapers nationwide and are estimated to have reached nearly 11 million readers. This is just one type of tool Public Affairs uses to promote awareness of Service programs and ultimately gain public support. The news media is one of the best ways to reach large numbers of people.

Babbitt Formally Swears in Clark At Patuxent Research Refuge

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt formally swore in Jamie Rappaport Clark as the Service's new director at an outdoor ceremony in the shadow of the National Wildlife Visitor Center at Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Maryland on September 16.

Before Clark took the oath, Babbitt paid high compliments to the professionalism of Service employees.

"One of the truly great pleasures of my life has been working with and getting acquainted with [Service employees] during the first Clinton administration," he told an audience of 200 people. "We have been through a lot together and I think we have brought this organization with all its divisions and all its manifold responsibilities to a new level of accomplishment and recognition."

Babbitt said that former director Mollie Beattie had asked him to convince the President to name a career Service employee as her successor and that Clark's name had come up repeatedly in their conversation.

"I have no doubt that Mollie is very pleased that we have collectively persuaded—and it wasn't much of a job of persuasion—the President to give you the obvious, wonderful choice," he said.

After being sworn in, Clark told the gathering that the reason the Service is stronger now because of the efforts of Secretary Babbitt.

"In the past, the Service often has had trouble getting Interior secretaries to pay attention to our issues or they have given us attention we don't need or want," she said. "Secretary Babbitt not only understands our issues inside and out but has used both his personal knowledge and prestige, as well as the weight of his office, to support us."

Clark emphasized that building partnerships with those outside the Service will be the focus of her tenure, especially through the newly completed National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia.



Solemn oath

Secretary Babbitt swears in Jamie Rappaport Clark as the Service's director, at Patuxent Research Refuge. Photo by Tami Heilemann.

"One of the truly great pleasures of my life has been working with and getting acquainted with [Service employees] during the first Clinton administration," said Secretary Babbitt.

"We will not compromise the well-being of any trust species for the sake of avoiding confrontation or reaching consensus. We will stand steadfast when necessary," she said. "But at the same time, our preferred method of operation will be to use the flexibility built into statutes wherever possible to meet conservation goals through voluntary partnerships."

The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation sponsored lunch at the visitors center following the ceremony.

Hugh Vickery, Public Affairs, Washington, DC

On the Horizon

■ The Senate ratified amendments to the Migratory Bird Treaty with Canada and Mexico in October. These treaties had prohibited the hunting of migratory birds during the closed season, March 10 to September 1. This prohibition did not recognize the need for indigenous people of Alaska and Aboriginal people of Canada to hunt for subsistence purposes. The amendments to the treaty correct this situation and also open the way for greater cooperation in data collection and migratory bird management. In September, Director Clark testified in favor of the amendments before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In October, the committee sent the amendments to the full Senate with the recommendation that they receive full ratification.

■ As *Fish & Wildlife News* went to press, representatives from the Washington and Southwest regional offices of the departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Defense were preparing to meet in Phoenix to discuss southwestern issues, particularly endangered species concerns and land and resource management needs. Sponsored by the secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior, the meeting was to address such topics as grazing, forest management, and water uses and how those activities affect listed, proposed, and candidate species. The meeting was expected to kick off development of a multi-agency Southwest Initiative that will address common solutions to problems, funding and personnel issues.

■ The Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, an official advisory group to the Service on recreational fishing and boating issues, is seeking the participation of sport fishing, boating and aquatic resource conservation stakeholders in developing a national strategy to increase participation in these activities. The council sent out more than 700 invitations to leaders in state and federal natural resource and tourism agencies, sport fishing and boating companies and organizations, the tourism industry and environmental groups. The goal is to have the plan completed by August, 1998. Congress currently is considering legislation that would fund implementation of the plan.

National Outreach Strategy Will Improve Communication With The Public

Suppose each individual McDonald's had its own logo, slogan, and food names. A McDonald's wouldn't necessarily have golden arches. It might have blue squares, or green circles. Some restaurants might advertise that "you deserve a break today," but others might lure you with the slogan "our food is cheap." The same sandwich might be called a Big Mac... or a Mighty Burger... or a Dandy Donald, depending on whatever the staff of that particular restaurant decided.

McDonald's would never do this, right? Because they want you to know who they are and what to expect from them, no matter where you are.

But the Fish & Wildlife Service's traditional approach to outreach has been, let's say—sort of without a "golden arches" concept. Our traditional approach to outreach has lacked consistency from region to region, from program to program, from field station to field station. As a result, the public is often confused about who we are and what we do.

The reasons for this are evident: a lack of dedicated resources for outreach, the diversity of our mission, and the enthusiasm of our troops in developing myriad messages, slogans, and outreach programs. While some efforts have served individual field stations or divisions reasonably well, most have not been strongly coordinated across divisions or regions.

At a recent Directorate meeting, the Service's top managers recognized the need for diversified outreach with a clear identity and public image for the Service. They decided to endorse a more strategic approach to using our limited outreach resources, and a more unified visual "image" for the Service. As a result, coming soon to your desk, or a desk near yours, is the new "National Outreach Strategy" developed by a team representing all Service regions and programs.

The Outreach Strategy's goal is to strengthen the Service's ability to carry out its resource mission by clearly establishing our identity as an agency whose activities are important to the American people and whose employees are credible and responsive public servants. The strategy focuses on:

- Recognizing that communication is an essential part of our resource mission;
- Identifying groups and individuals who are affected by our activities;
- Building relationships with key decision makers and opinion leaders in each community;
- Using simple, standard messages to communicate why our activities are important to people as well as to fish and wildlife;
- Providing timely notification of decisions to affected parties; and
- Making sure we explain the mission of the Service in our outreach activities.

The document also provides a sample format for developing an outreach plan and a "check list" to help employees think through the steps needed to plan a communications strategy. Already, all endangered species listing packages must have an outreach plan, and—with the adoption of the National Outreach Strategy—one will be required for all significant Service actions or policy decisions.

In conjunction with the development of the National Outreach Strategy, the Service has already taken steps to strengthen its public image. New design standards are in effect, giving our publications a unified "look." The Service is also adopting policies regarding vehicles and uniforms that will help strengthen our public image.

There's lots more work still to be done. The Service has advertised for a national outreach coordinator to help put the strategy into effect and expects to form a national outreach team to improve coordination of the agency's various outreach efforts.

We'll never have golden arches, but working together we can strengthen public understanding of who we are, what we do, and why we do it—and thereby strengthen our ability to conserve America's fish and wildlife resources.

*Megan Durham, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Refuge Stars on Silver Screen



Wide exposure

Movie-goers at cinemas in St. Joseph, Missouri, get an invitation to visit nearby Squaw Creek NWR through these pre-movie advertisements. USFWS photo.

Movie patrons in St. Joseph, Missouri, have more to do than munch popcorn in between feature presentations at the local cinema. Through mid-December, more than 250,000 movie-goers will see a series of slides featuring information about the Service and nearby Squaw Creek NWR.

The project is the work of Squaw Creek Refuge Manager Ron Bell, who came up with the idea while watching paid advertisements at a local theater.

"I thought how nice it would be to give the audience information about fish and wildlife instead of just commercials," Bell says. "What a great way to reach a lot of people at one time."

He pursued the idea and found that the company in charge of the local theaters' advertising was happy to include the Service messages for a slight fee. The \$890 cost of producing and running the slides was quickly defrayed by the Midwest Interpretive Association and local refuge support groups. Bell was in business.

He oversaw the creation of four slides, including scenes of the refuge, National Wildlife Refuge Week events, and the refuge's popular Eagle Days in December. Viewers at 12 cinemas in St. Joseph began seeing the slides in June, and will continue to get the message through early December.

*Georgia Parham, External Affairs,
Bloomington, Indiana*

Feathers, Feathers Everywhere And Not a One to Spare

If you know where a dead eagle is, the folks at the National Eagle Repository near Denver have a simple request: send it to them.

Since its establishment in the early 1970s, the repository has performed its basic mission of providing eagles and other bird carcasses to Native Americans for their religious and cultural use with a single-minded diligence and efficiency worthy of consideration by the folks who give Hammer awards to outstanding federal operations.

But there's a problem: the demand for eagles always seems to outstrip the supply. Supervisory Wildlife Repository Specialist Bernadette Hilbourn reports a waiting list of 4,500 people, meaning most will wait two and half years for their order.

In June, Hilbourn's colleague, Wildlife Repository Specialist Dennis Wiist, sent a letter to bird rehabilitators, state wildlife officials, and Service law enforcement agents listing 18 different bird carcasses ranging from anhingas to goshawks needed to meet requests from Native Americans. The requests range from one bird (for goshawks, American goldfinches, hummingbirds, snowy



Thorough examination

Dennis Wiist examines an electrocuted golden eagle at the National Eagle Repository. This bird was burned so badly it offered little in the way of salvageable feathers for use in meeting requests from Native Americans. Photo by Phil Million.

owls, crested caracaras, white-tailed hawks, and white-tailed kites) to 10 (for gyrfalcons) to "thousands," which is what Wiist wrote on the line listing bald and golden eagles.

"I think we would get more eagles if the people that found them realized their spiritual significance to Native Americans," Hilbourn says.

About 95 percent of orders received at the repository are for whole eagles, with an average of about 1,000 people applying for the 800 to 900 available birds each year. Requests are filled on a first-come, first-serve basis by date of application.

To be eligible to receive a bird, applicants must be enrolled members of one of the 500- plus federally-recognized tribes, complete an application obtained from the nearest Service regional office and routed through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and have certification from a religious leader that the feathers will be used for religious purposes. An applicant can only apply for one bird at a time.

Native Americans use eagle feathers, heads, claws, and even wing bones (from which whistles are fashioned) in different ways. Single eagle feathers, for instance, might be used when a child receives his or her Indian name, or at graduation, or for bravery. Hilbourn says the feather in greatest demand is the black-tipped white center tail feather from an immature golden eagle.

Eagles turned in to the repository typically have died of natural causes or fatal encounters with power lines, windmills, vehicles, or illegal shooters or trappers. The repository does not accept poisoned birds because of the hazard they pose to human health.

The typical dead eagle stays only three to five days at the repository before it is shipped out to the next applicant on the list. This is just long enough for Wiist to expertly inspect it, note its condition, species and age, and bag and freeze it for shipping. In cases where some of the bird's feathers are missing or too damaged to use, Wiist painstakingly adds replacement parts from another bird to make it complete. He prides himself on making sure his Native American clients get a whole eagle.

If you find a bird carcass, do not attempt to pick it up; only licensed bird rehabilitators and wildlife law enforcement agents are authorized to salvage birds. Instead, report it to the nearest Service or state law enforcement office.

Prior to shipping, Wiist calls the recipient and provides a detailed rundown on the condition of the bird he or she is to receive. Sometimes requesters will refuse a bird because it has been cut open for necropsy purposes or is otherwise thought to be unacceptable. Although an eagle carcass may be decomposed by the time it is found, the feathers are frequently still in good condition.

"It's always nice when they call and tell us they are happy—especially with birds where I replaced the parts," Wiist says.

On occasion, Wiist receives birds that are already "parted" or dismembered into wings, tail, head and legs. Wiist reckons the would-be vivisectionists who do this are trying to make his job easier, but because they often make cuts that make the birds less than desirable to Native Americans he wishes they would put away their knives and simply send him the whole bird.

State or federal wildlife personnel salvage and ship most of the eagles sent to the repository. Hilbourn suspects that only about half the eagles that die each year are sent to the sprawling warehouse complex at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in Denver's outskirts that has housed the repository since 1995. The reasons for this are difficult to pin down, but some of it may simply be lack of knowledge about what to do once a dead eagle is found or turned in.

"We will use everything that gets picked up," says Hilbourn. "No matter how dirty, decomposed, smelly, or bloody it is—we want it!"

*Phil Million, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Tour Reveals Damage Caused By Snow Goose Glut

For several years, the Service's Migratory Bird Management Office staff and other waterfowl experts have been warning anyone who will listen about the savage damage huge and growing numbers of mid-continent lesser snow geese are doing to their Canadian breeding grounds along the western shore of Hudson Bay.

This August, the multi-agency Arctic Goose Joint Venture Management Board took this process one step further by hosting three tours of some of the degraded coastal habitat near Churchill, Manitoba, for stakeholders, decision makers and journalists.

"It's one thing to hear about this problem," said Service Deputy Director John Rogers, who took part in one of the tours, "but actually seeing it really brings home what all the concern is about. The devastation of these breeding grounds is staggering in both extent and degree and presents a huge challenge to U.S. and Canadian wildlife managers."

One of the basic purposes of the tours was to bring home to participants the urgent need to reduce mid-continent lesser snow goose population by as much as half by 2005 in hopes of saving thousands of miles of Arctic coastal wetlands from possibly irreversible destruction.

The white geese using this area have increased from 900,000 in the late '60s to more than 3 million today and are eating themselves and numerous other species out of house and home. Scientists studying these birds call this phenomenon a "trophic cascade" and worry its ultimate impact will be to destroy staging, foraging, and nesting habitat not only for the snow geese but also for other waterfowl, shorebirds, marsh birds, upland birds, and passerines using this once-healthy ecosystem. It is, they believe, time for drastic action.

The growth of the mid-continent lesser snow goose population is tied closely to agricultural practices on the birds' wintering grounds and migratory flight paths. Development of rice farming and soybean crops along the Texas and Louisiana coastline in the 1950s and '60s gave the birds a rich alternative to their normal salt marsh plant diet. Similarly, conversion of pastures to corn, barley, oats, rye, and wheat

in the northern states and provinces along their flyway offered an additional source of high nutrition for the adaptable birds during migration.

The net result over time was that winter mortality of snow geese declined sharply and stronger, healthier birds returned to their nesting grounds where they enjoyed greater breeding success than ever before. This process was abetted by a warming trend that produced several earlier nesting seasons and by a decline in snow goose hunting. Snow geese can live 10 years and estimates are the population will continue to increase at roughly 5 percent to 7 percent a year unless something is done.

The Hudson Bay Lowland tours this summer featured visits to La Perouse Bay near Churchill where an active snow goose colony has been studied intensely since 1968. There, Hudson Bay Project scientists Robert F. Rockwell, Kenneth F. Abraham, and Robert L. Jeffries, and several students carrying out field work in the area, gave tour participants a close look at what is fast becoming a coastal wasteland.

Numbers of snow geese using La Perouse Bay increased from 2,000 pairs in 1968 to 22,500 pairs in 1990. Scientists estimate the geese's voracious grazing and grubbing have essentially destroyed two-thirds of the inter-tidal marsh vegetation they forage on. The remaining 35 percent is considered "overgrazed."

The evidence is everywhere. Where the cord grasses and sedges preferred by these geese once flourished, the ground is cracked and bare and dotted with sterile, salt-encrusted craters. What little vegetation remains is mainly moss carpets or Mare's tail and Yukon ragwort, none of which are used much by foraging geese.

To study more closely the geese's effects on the coastal vegetation, the La Perouse Bay researchers set up a variety of wire exclosures beginning in 1982 to document what happened to the surrounding habitat and to measure various approaches to revegetation. The contrast between the lush growth of native grasses within the oldest exclosures and the nearly bare ground surrounding them tells the dramatic story of the over-grazing that afflicts these coastal plains.



Viewing the damage

The contrast between this verdant exclosure and the surrounding land illustrates the severe damage growing numbers of mid-continent lesser snow geese are causing to their Canadian breeding grounds. Photo by Phil Million.

Unfortunately the devastation at La Perouse Bay is replicated up and down the relatively narrow strip of western Hudson Bay coastal salt marsh and south into James Bay, where vast flights of staging snow geese have turned the northern shore of Akimiski Island into a beaten ground zone. One of the tour leaders, Dr. Bruce Batt, of Ducks Unlimited, took a 1,000-mile helicopter flight over the coast before the tours began and said he saw "severe habitat damage" along most of the route.

One would think such extensive habitat destruction would be a precursor to a crash in goose numbers, but the truth is somewhat more complicated. While there have been decreases in the size and survival rate of goslings hatched at La Perouse Bay and a decline in reproductive success, the geese there and elsewhere have proven they can adapt to adverse conditions by dispersing to areas where conditions are better.

In their search for better forage, snow geese with goslings are known to have moved as much as 60 kilometers from the hatching area. Similarly, birds are forming new nesting colonies where they find suitable habitat. As one of the La Perouse Bay researchers puts it, "these geese are proving quite adept at beating the system."

Wheels Across Oklahoma . . . or The Great American Road Trip

The question of what to do about this over-abundance of white geese was asked frequently by tour participants during meetings in Churchill and in the field at La Perouse Bay. It resurfaced at the nearby Nestor 1 field camp where the research focus of USGS-BRD researcher Dr. Don Rusch and his colleagues is on the declining populations of Eastern Prairie Canada geese.

Researchers working closely with these geese populations are unified in their belief that effective population reduction must concentrate on actively reducing adult survival. To do nothing would result in many more years of habitat destruction, continued declines in other species who use these areas, and slow death by starvation for increasing numbers of goslings.

“The consensus in the research and management community is that we should develop a comprehensive and effective population reduction strategy and begin to implement it soon,” said Service Migratory Bird Chief Paul Schmidt. “To begin that process we held three workshops this summer for biologists from national wildlife refuges, the Migratory Bird Office, and others to look at winter habitat issues and increased hunting opportunities.

“Also, the Wildlife Management Institute has agreed to convene a stakeholders group from government and nongovernment conservation organizations. The group will recommend by January to the Service and to the Canadian Wildlife Service a biologically and socially acceptable strategy to reduce the mid-continent lesser snow goose population by 50 percent by the year 2005.”

Schmidt and other waterfowl managers grappling with the snow goose problem know they have their work cut out for them in dealing with a species that has developed quite a reputation for “beating the system.”

“It won’t be easy,” Schmidt said, “but we’ve got to start somewhere.”

*Phil Million, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Southwest Regional Director Nancy Kaufman led a three-day bus tour of Oklahoma for journalists, congressional staff, representatives of conservation organizations, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and others with an interest in the Service’s mission. The group visited wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, “Partners for Wildlife” sites and other destinations along a 1,100-mile loop that began and ended in Oklahoma City.

We began our trek at 7 a.m. to the strains of the Beatles singing “Magical Mystery Tour” while the wind whipped across the Sooner State, and the rain of Hurricane Nora tried to dampen the spirits of the travelers . . . but it could not.

Eleven hundred miles of Oklahoma rushed under the wheels of our bus, loaded with videos, microphones for presentations, and reclining seats (only Bob Streeter ever had it better).

In three days, I spoke to two chambers of commerce (Tishomingo and Cherokee) and had dinner with the Director of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and his staff plus State Game Commissioner John Groendyke. We visited five national wildlife refuges, one national fish hatchery, and three dynamite “Partners for Wildlife” projects. We saw buffalo, elk, sturgeon, paddlefish, vireo habitat, disabled and youth fishing areas, more trees than in the entire state of New Mexico, and had one really fine time.

Six congressional staffers and six reporters joined us for all or part of the trip. All the project leaders participated in our visits to their stations. ES folks made presentations between stops. Brand new Region 2 congressional liaison staffer Lisa Morrison came along for the ride, as well as Steve Helfert, the new geographic manager for Oklahoma.

I was impressed with the support expressed even in communities which were not happy with us a year ago. The “ecotourism” potential for towns with habitat seems to be taking off and what was once “wasted development land” is now an economic boom as part of the refuge system.

And now . . . onward to Texas, where we’ll tour the coast next spring.

*Nancy Kaufman, Regional Director,
Albuquerque, New Mexico*



A learning experience

Russ Horton, a biologist with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, explains native grass production to Region 2 Regional Director Nancy Kaufman and Partners for Wildlife project landowner Paul Odom. Odom, a real estate developer, is restoring more than 600 acres of his land in western Oklahoma, much of it through the Service’s Partners for Wildlife program. Among his PFW projects: restoring several wetlands and removing more than 60 acres of red cedar trees which affect habitat for the endangered black-capped vireo. USFWS photo.

The Service and the Ikes: Partners for Responsible Outdoor Recreation



*By Paul Hansen,
Executive Director,
Izaak Walton League
of America*

On Sept. 5, 1976,
Jack Lorenz, then
executive director of

the Izaak Walton League of America, became incensed about a CBS broadcast depicting hunters as unsafe, unethical slobs. The result has been a highly successful program that led to partnerships between the League and the Service to promote responsible outdoor behavior across the country.

"The idea of the 'Guns of Autumn' broadcast was to scare and disgust every viewer," Lorenz said. "It did that in spades, but the people who were most angry and offended were hunters."

With support from several USFWS Federal Aid administrative grants, the League's Outdoor Ethics Program has reached out to bird watchers, hikers, campers and canoeists in addition to its traditional constituency of hunters and anglers during the past two decades.

Hundreds of League members, or "Ikes," serve as volunteer hunter education and aquatic resource education instructors. Members also teach the public about safe, responsible outdoor recreation

through chapter-sponsored hunting, fishing and other wildlife and natural resource-related events.

The Outdoor Ethics Program is just one of many ways the League works in partnership with the Service. Ikes also helped establish national wildlife refuges, such as Canaan Valley NWR in West Virginia and New Jersey's Edwin B. Forsythe NWR.

Nationally, League members support a strong Endangered Species Act and additional funding for wildlife and habitat protection to keep wildlife from being listed as threatened or endangered. Service biologists also have learned more about stream monitoring and restoration through work with the League's nationally recognized Save Our Streams Program.

In turn, the Service has supported a number of the League's Outdoor Ethics Program projects including an international outdoor ethics conference in 1987 and a national conference in 1996, several research projects about hunter ethics and education, and a resource guide to outdoor ethics-related programs.

Currently, the Service is providing funding for the League's Hunter Ethics/Land Access Project, which will explore connections between advanced hunter education opportunities and hunter access to private land.

and pulled 72-year-old Agnes Harder to safety. Stolz later learned that Mrs. Harder was diabetic and unable to walk.

Stolz next turned his attention to a nearby house trailer. He helped evacuate the trailer's residents and used their phone to dial 911. Within minutes, local firefighters and an ambulance crew were on the scene. The Harders were safely transported to local hospitals and burn centers. Their house was a total loss.

Interviewed by the local newspaper, The Shepherdstown Chronicle, Stolz said he "just used common sense. It's important for everyone to use common sense in an emergency."



Paul Hansen and Waldo

Photo courtesy of Izaak Walton League of America.

Helping outdoor users understand the importance of conservation and promoting respect for the land has been a hallmark of the League's work for 75 years. Founded in 1922 in Chicago, the League has 50,000 members organized in 350 chapters across the United States.

According to League policy, protecting habitat, the resource base, is the highest priority. Sustaining fish and wildlife populations is the second-highest priority followed by accommodating the needs of the user. The League is poised to help address emerging and continuing outdoor ethics issues such as managing land for competing recreational uses, understanding outdoor users' cultural differences, and accommodating increases in the overall number of outdoor recreationists.

However, Ikes emphasize that these issues are important only if land and water are available for recreation in the first place. As League policy states: "The mission of wildlife conservation is to perpetuate natural habitats that will support abundant wildlife populations, not to preside over the allocation of a vanishing resource."

For more information about the League and its Outdoor Ethics Program, call (800)IKE-LINE; e-mail to general@iwla.org; or visit the League's Internet home page at <http://www.iwla.org>.

Service Employee Saves Woman from Fire

"Be prepared!" The Boy Scout motto came in handy August 14 for Gary Stolz of NCTC's Division of Education, a former Eagle Scout.

Stolz was commuting to NCTC across the West Virginia countryside early in the morning when he saw a house in flames. He pulled into the driveway of the home and honked the horn repeatedly.

Two of the residents, Kenneth Harder, 65, and his son David, 39, managed to stagger out from the dwelling. But Stolz saw a third figure by the side door. He rushed in

"Special Place" in the Vermont Woods Honors Mollie Beattie

It was exactly the kind of event that Mollie Beattie would have loved:

Late September in Northern Vermont. Splashes of red, yellow, orange and gold on a wide vista of the Green Mountains. A gusty wind and patches of sun, offset by an occasional rain shower. Indeed, a perfect setting in which to conclude a major corporate partnership, an agreement to protect an important ecosystem in the Great North Woods, and celebrate a human life.

It was, to be sure, one of those rare intersections of time, place, accomplishment, and recognition that brought together Champion International Corp., one of the largest private landowners in the country, with the Service's Northeast region to dedicate a lowland bog to the memory of Mollie Beattie, the Service's late director.

The focal point of the ceremony was the signing of a memorandum of agreement between the Service and Champion

International, to protect the new Mollie Beattie Bog in perpetuity and reaffirm a cooperative partnership for conservation. According to the memorandum of agreement, Champion and the Service will "work together cooperatively to promote biodiversity in Champion's landholdings in the Nulhegan Basin, Vermont, and . . . honor the ideas and work of Mollie Beattie."

Among those attending the ceremony at the Trapp Family Lodge in Stowe, were Carlton Owen, Champion International's vice president for forest policy; Richard Porterfield, executive vice president for forest products at Champion; Ronald E. Lambertson, the Service's Northeast regional director; Rick Schwolsky, Mollie's husband and Mrs. Pat Beattie, of Ketchum, Idaho, Mollie's mother. Master of Ceremonies for the event was Cathy Short, Deputy Regional Director.

Also in attendance were representatives of Vermont Senators Patrick Leahy and James

Jeffords, and Jane Difley, a friend of Mollie's and the president of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

The effort was part of Champion International's on-going "Special Places in the Forest ®" effort where "... areas of unique ecological, historical, educational or aesthetic value are set aside from the company's normal forest management activities." There are 46 other such Special Places among the 5 million acres that comprise Champion International's U.S. landholding. The Mollie Beattie Bog is the only such place named for an individual and is also the only Special Place for which Champion has committed permanent protection.

The Mollie Beattie Bog is one of the largest lowland bogs in the Nulhegan Basin of Vermont's famous Northeast Kingdom.

The 20-acre bog, flat and open, supports a wide variety of shrubs, stunted trees, and other plants and is surrounded by a 56-acre buffer zone. It is a thick, dark swamp crowded with black spruce and tamarack trees up to 80 feet high. It is habitat to the carnivorous pitcher plant and locally rare bog sedge, a grass-like plant common only in bogs much farther north in Maine and Canada. Moose, deer, snowshoe hare, and spruce grouse (rare in Vermont) also live in the area.

The Service has also identified the Nulhegan Basin as a focal area for land acquisition for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish & Wildlife Refuge, which spans the length of the Connecticut River from Canada to Connecticut, because the basin supports at least 13 rare plant and animal species and provides extensive forests used as breeding habitat by numerous migratory birds.

In his remarks, Porterfield applauded Mollie as a woman who "lived a life marked by dedication, vision, and accomplishment." By signing this agreement, Porterfield said, Champion and the Service created "... a living testament to Mollie's belief that the Service can and must work jointly with private landowners to accomplish conservation objectives."

*Spence Conley, External Affairs
Hadley, Massachusetts*



Remembering Mollie

Service staff and special guests dedicated the 20-acre Mollie Beattie Bog in northern Vermont. Champion International Corporation set aside the land on which the bog lies. Pictured (l-r): Northeast Regional Director Ronald E. Lambertson; Pat Beattie, Mollie Beattie's mother; Carlton Owen, vice president for forest policy of Champion International Corporation; Jane Difley, president of the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests; Rick Schwolsky, Mollie's husband; Richard Porterfield, executive vice president of Champion International; and Region 5 Deputy Regional Director Cathy Short. Photo by Spence Conley.

Service's Own Diplomatic Corps Celebrates 20 Years of International Wildlife Conservation

They travel great distances. They feel at home in remote locales. They know no borders.

No, they are not neotropical songbirds. They are the staff of the Service's Office of International Affairs. For the past two decades they have traveled around the world to share their knowledge of wildlife conservation and management with other countries.

Using the theme "Wildlife Without Borders," International Affairs held a 20th anniversary bash in September to celebrate its unique programs and partners—from international wetlands conservation to polar bear tagging, from Argentina to Siberia—and to recognize individuals and groups who have contributed to the program over the years.

"The people of the Office of International Affairs are the Service's diplomats in every sense of the word."

—Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark

"The people of the Office of International Affairs are the Service's diplomats in every sense of the word," said Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark in her welcoming remarks.

Clark emphasized the crucial role International Affairs plays in fulfilling the Service's mission.

"As the federal agency responsible for the management of much of this nation's wildlife, we must recognize that many of these same resources are shared with other nations," she said. "It is not enough to care about them only within our own boundaries. We must work to ensure they enjoy equal stewardship worldwide."

Following remarks by Assistant Director for International Affairs Marshall Jones, program chief Herb Rafaele recognized individuals and organizations for their outstanding contributions to helping the



An international effort

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, International Affairs produced this poster recognizing some of the program's most successful conservation partnerships. Poster design by Timothy Knapp.

Service achieve its mission. Each honoree received a framed, limited edition "Wildlife Without Borders" poster.

Among those recognized were:

- Shealler Price-Perry, travel coordinator at the Interior Service Center, who for more than 20 years has made sure that passports and visas are issued to IA staff on time and without mistakes;

- Dr. Steven Landfried, a Madison, Wisconsin, high school teacher and volunteer who has made important contributions on behalf Service to crane conservation in Asia;

- the Service's Southwest region, which has remained committed to international conservation initiatives, especially with Mexico;

- Kathy Washburn, director of the Department of Interior's International Affairs office who for the past seven years has been a key cooperator and advocate for the Service to higher levels in the Department; and

- the Bombay Natural History Society, which has grown from a group of eight concerned citizens in India to one of the leading natural history and conservation organizations in Asia. The society was honored for its work with the Service and its major role in the development of biological data for the management of Indian wildlife resources.

Guests at the celebration enjoyed Russian and Mexican folk music and sampled foods of the different countries with which International Affairs has partnerships. The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation underwrote the costs of the food, and Goodson Associates contributed a camera trap that is used in wildlife management.

*Patricia Fisher, Public Affairs,
Washington, DC*

Minnesota: Home to Wildlife and Wildlife Artists



Minnesota is a big state for ducks, duck hunters and Federal Duck Stamp artists. The Service's Federal Duck Stamp Program has had a major impact on waterfowl in the state, and Minnesotans, in turn, have been leading contributors to the program.

So it's only natural that 1997-98 Federal Duck Stamp artist and Minnesota native Bob Hautman's original paintings, limited-edition prints and state duck stamp prints have raised thousands of dollars for wildlife conservation in Minnesota.

When Hautman was honored at a July ceremony, his image of a lone Canada goose standing on a mat of cattails near the edge of a mirror-smooth wetland had already begun supporting wetland conservation efforts throughout the United States.

The celebration, sponsored by the Minnesota Waterfowl Association (MWA), Lake Minnetonka Stamp Club, U.S. Postal Service, and the Fish & Wildlife Service, showcased one of this country's most successful conservation efforts.

"The Federal Duck Stamp program joins principle to practice by acquiring lands for the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's most outstanding collection of lands and waters dedicated to wildlife," said Region 3 Regional Director Bill Hartwig. "We are very proud of this program and of the many thousands of Americans who have helped build the refuge system through their purchase of the Federal Duck Stamp."

As part of this event, the MWA hosted a silent auction. Funds raised will be dedicated to the Bob Hautman Habitat Restoration Project and matched by the Service to restore 10 wetlands and associated native grasslands on the Lake Lillian Waterfowl Production Area in southeastern Kandiyohi County.

The Service acquired the 310-acre Lake Lillian WPA earlier this summer using Duck Stamp dollars. The area features 45 acres of restorable wetlands and 125 acres of original wetlands, 55 acres of restorable grasslands, 75 acres of native grasslands and 10 acres of woodlot.

Waterfowl production areas, which are open to public hunting and other wildlife-oriented activities, typically contain small, natural wetlands with associated native grasslands. They are mainly located in the Prairie Pothole Region of Minnesota and the Northern Plains states.

During 1996, using Federal Duck Stamp revenues, the Service acquired new WPAs amounting to almost 6,000 acres in Minnesota. Today, 805 WPAs in 43 counties conserve nearly 170,000 acres of important habitats acquired with Duck Stamp proceeds.

Jim Hautman and Bruce Miller, also Minnesota-born Federal Duck Stamp artists, were honored with similar habitat projects. Hautman's 1995 project restored 12 wetlands totaling nine acres and 17 acres of grasslands for six landowners in Carver and Hennepin counties. Miller's project, in Hennepin County on land owned by the Vinland Center, restored 10 wetlands amounting to six acres and 100 acres of grasslands in 1994.

There have been nearly 60 Federal Duck Stamp artists since the program began in 1934. Bob Hautman is the 14th national winner to have been born and raised in Minnesota, or resided in the state at one time.

"To be able to influence waterfowl and wetland conservation by winning the federal contest is a great honor," Hautman said at the July recognition ceremony. "Not many artists have such an excellent opportunity to influence conservation through art and to help people realize just how important wetlands are in the scheme of our natural world."

*Susan Dreiband, External Affairs
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

Northeast Region Wins 1996 Duck Stamp Challenge by a Landslide

Spearheaded by huge sales at Chincoteague NWR in Virginia, Region 5 scored an overwhelming victory in the 1996 Duck Stamp Challenge, selling nearly twice the number of stamps as its closest challenger, according to the preliminary report from the Duck Stamp office.

Nationwide, national wildlife refuges sold 18,873 duck stamps last year, raising nearly \$300,000.

Preliminary results of the 1996 Duck Stamp Challenge:

Region 1:	274 (4th Place)
Region 2:	248 (5th Place)
Region 3:	5,243 (2nd Place)
Region 4:	4,001 (3rd Place)
Region 5:	8,878 (1st Place)
Region 6:	213 (6th Place)
Region 7:	16 (7th Place)

**Top-selling national wildlife refuge:
Chincoteague NWR, 4,106**

Honorable mentions:

Location:	Stamps Sold:
Parker River NWR	2,952
MN Reg. Office VIM	1,956
Crab Orchard NWR	1,830
Ding Darling NWR	1,683
Loxahatchee NWR	1,448

Source: Federal Duck Stamp Office

Breaking the Language Barrier Brings Federal Aid to Japan

It all started with a simple fish hook.

As Bob Sousa and Dee Mazzaresse visited fishing tackle manufacturers and touted the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration program at the 1994 American Sportfishing Association trade show, a Japanese gentleman approached them with a sample of his fish hooks.

They tried to explain that they weren't retailers, but he didn't speak English and they didn't know any Japanese. They didn't want to offend him, so they nodded and said "thank you." He sent them off with a few hooks, many bows, and a big smile.

As they walked away, Sousa, Region 5 assistant regional director for Federal Aid, said that it was a shame they couldn't talk with the man and explain how his fish hooks were an important part of fisheries management in the United States. At that moment, he made a resolution with some far-reaching effects: "I'm going to learn some Japanese by next year."

Over the next year, Sousa listened to Japanese language instruction tapes during his daily commute, and when the 1995 ASA show rolled around, he tested his newfound language skills at the International Reception.

Fortified with a Kirin beer, Sousa approached a small group of Japanese fishing tackle manufacturers. A polite "konbanwa" (good evening) brought smiles and nods.

Sousa introduced himself in Japanese, described fisheries management and explained the basic user-pay/user-benefit foundation of the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program. He used a translator to explain some of the more complicated concepts such as excise taxes.

Sousa learned that while recreational fishing is popular in Japan, fisheries are in very poor shape because of overfishing and habitat degradation. He met Ryuichi Omura, the highly respected and influential president of the Japanese Fishing Tackle Manufacturers Association, and eight months later, Sousa was winging his way toward Japan to give



An international affair

Joa Luis Faria (left) of Companhia Brasileira de Cartuchos, Young Soo Park (center) of Superior Sports International, Inc., and Region 5 Assistant Regional Director for Federal Aid Bob Sousa, at the largest fishing tackle trade show in South America. USFWS Photo.

a presentation in Japanese to the board of directors of JFTMA about fisheries management in the United States.

He explained the partnership between the Service, the states, the fishing tackle industry and anglers that created a stable and adequate funding source to conduct research and management programs, restore habitat, construct and operate hatcheries, build boating and fishing access areas, and conduct aquatic resource education programs.

Japan is now developing their own proposal for a similar funding mechanism.

Sousa continued his international outreach at the 1996 ASA Show, talking with fishing tackle manufacturers from Brazil. Although an estimated 30 million Brazilian anglers participate in recreational fishing each year, subsistence fishing has placed tremendous pressure on Brazil's fisheries and aquatic habitats, with very little funding available for research and management programs.

Brazil's national fisheries program director invited Sousa to make a presentation on the Sport Fish Restoration Program to key fishing tackle industry and government leaders at the largest fishing tackle trade show in South America.

Sousa began a new set of language tapes, this time in Portuguese. His presentation at the show was interrupted by a spontaneous round of applause after the first few sentences. Afterward, he heard over and over again, "Thank you for coming. This type of program could help Brazil."

The Worldwatch Institute annual "State of the World" report recently identified eight countries that will profoundly influence the global environment because of their populations, natural resource consumption rates, economic growth, and biological diversity. This "E-8" includes the United States, Brazil, China, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia and Russia.

Sousa's response on hearing this?

"I could probably learn Chinese."

Dee Mazzaresse, Federal Aid, Hadley, Massachusetts

Region 5 Lets Schoolchildren Adopt-a-Salmon Family

Students in 80 New England schools are getting a hands-on lesson in conservation through Region 5's "Adopt-A-Salmon Family" watershed education program. Conceived in the fall of 1993 to build public awareness and support for Atlantic salmon restoration, the program has evolved into a popular way for students, teachers, parents and other members of the community to be involved in maintaining the ecological health of their watersheds.

The simple act of raising a "family" of Atlantic salmon in the classroom, coupled with a school year-long exploration of the interplay of human culture with the environment, allows students to understand their connections to the natural world. With the spring release of young salmon into local streams, the students' sense of ownership extends from fish to river to watershed. And so are sewn the seeds of watershed stewardship.

While the program is in classrooms across New England, perhaps its greatest impact is on youth from inner cities where the disconnection between people and the natural world may be the greatest.

Take, for example, students in Judy Robinson's special education class at the Phyllis Wheatley Middle School in Boston. After learning about the program in a television news story, Robinson contacted program coordinator Matt Poole to ask about obtaining salmon eggs for her classroom. Not only did she receive the eggs but a full-sized hatchery truck from the Nashua National Fish Hatchery showed up in the schoolyard on a crisp November day. Students and parents eagerly viewed the spawning of adult salmon.

Culminating a successful year in May, students trekked to the Souhegan River in southern New Hampshire to release their young aquatic progeny into the wild. Wide-eyed students peppered Poole, outdoor recreation planner for the Central New England Anadromous Fish program, aka "the fish guy," with questions. Then students bid farewell to their salmon from the banks of a stream far removed from the more

familiar concrete, skyscrapers, and traffic noise of the city. Every year similar experiences are repeated in places with names like Lowell, Manchester, Lawrence, Salem, and Burlington.

Adopt-a-Salmon Family has become more than just an outreach program to support the Service's involvement in Atlantic salmon restoration. It has created an opportunity for the agency to work more closely with a host of partners, from watershed associations to state and other federal agencies. These partnerships has significantly leveraged limited Service outreach dollars.

The program expanded beyond New England to the western shores of Lake Champlain this fall. Because Atlantic salmon have a limited geographic range, Poole is considering a similar program for trout. Meanwhile, he says, New England students are "tuning in and turning on to watershed stewardship!"



Saying goodbye

Students from a Lawrence, Mass., public school release Atlantic salmon fry into a stream as part of their involvement with the Northeast region's Adopt-a-Salmon-Family program. Photo by Matt Poole.

North Dakota Firefighters Save Eagles

The Washburn, North Dakota, Rural Fire Department raced to put out a fire in a cottonwood tree in the Missouri River bottoms this summer. The reason? The tree was home to one of only nine bald eagle nests in the state.

By the time they arrived at the tree 17 miles outside of Washburn, flames were 10 feet high. Apparently, the eagles weren't overly concerned. They left their eaglets in the nest while making occasional flights past the tree to check the progress of the fire-fighting efforts.

"It was good that they stayed in the nest," firefighter Mike Goos, a biologist at nearby Audubon NWR, said. "They could have bailed out, with all the smoke and trees falling down around them. But their instincts were good and they sat still."

As many as 15 volunteer firefighters battled the stubborn blaze over four days until the last sparks were extinguished. The cause of the fire has not been determined.

Roger Collins, a Service biologist at the North Dakota Field Office who monitors the state's bald eagles, said the loss of the nest would have been a setback for North Dakota's small, but growing, eagle population. "This is the highest number of active nests since bald eagles once again began nesting along the Missouri River in 1988 and we don't want to lose a single one of them," he said.

Ken Torkelson, Refuges and Wildlife/ Ecological Services, Bismark, North Dakota

Job Corps Members: Students, Leaders, Ambassadors



High praise

Director Jamie Rappaport Clark encouraged these Job Corps students to participate in environmental education opportunities. USFWS photo.

Service Director Jamie Rappaport Clark reminded 15 Job Corps students recently that they play a key role in Service outreach efforts and encouraged them to participate in environmental education programs at their centers.

Student government leaders from Mingo Job Corps Center in Puxico, Missouri, and Treasure Lake Job Corps Center in Indianola, Oklahoma, met with Clark while attending a Student Government and Leadership Conference sponsored by the Job Corps Program Unit.

Clark explained the importance of the Service communicating with the public and emphasized that the students can be “ambassadors” for the Service, telling people in their communities about the Service and the good that is done for wildlife and for the environment.

She lauded the Environmental Education Program at Treasure Lake and a similar proposed program for Mingo. Both are partnership programs with the refuges, local universities and schools within their communities.

While in Washington, D.C., Job Corps students also had the opportunity to visit with Sen. Jim Inhofe and Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma and Sen. Christopher “Kit” Bond and Rep. JoAnn Emerson of Missouri, all of whom expressed their support for the Job Corps mission.

*James Banks, Job Corps Staff
Washington, DC*

Erwin National Fish Hatchery Celebrates 100 Years of Service

Two hundred visitors celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Service’s oldest facility in the Southeast during a day long event in July.

The Erwin National Fish Hatchery was established in 1897 with an initial purchase of 10.83 acres of land near Erwin, Tennessee. The total cost was a mere \$1,025. The hatchery has been renovated many times since its initial construction, and ponds have given way to a modern raceway system replete with aerator building and a liquid oxygen supplementation unit.

The celebration featured guided tours, face painting, fly tying demonstrations, and displays of historical hatchery photographs and antique fishing equipment. U.S. Rep. Bill Jenkins of Tennessee spoke during a ceremony marking the anniversary.

Since its inception, the hatchery primarily has produced rainbow trout. Records show that early fishery management practices were often not accomplished according to today’s sound scientific principles. For instance, rainbow trout were stocked wherever and whenever fish culturists

thought they might survive. Due to the lack of suitable roads, much of the early stocking was accomplished through the use of modified rail cars.

The hatchery now functions as an integral part of the National Broodstock Program. More than 13 million disease-free, eyed eggs from four strains of rainbow trout are shipped to federal, state, and tribal hatcheries each year in support of scientifically sound fishery management programs. The facility also is deeply involved in broodstock culture technology, cooperative ventures with other agencies, and public outreach.

The hatchery has always been a place where people could come and enjoy a quiet, leisurely day with friends and family. In fact, more than 40,000 people a year visit the hatchery. Hatchery manager Jack Jones, said the facility may, along with several other local tourism attractions, become the focal point of a new “eco-tourism” market for Tennessee’s Unicoi County.

*Diana Hawkins, External Affairs,
Atlanta, Georgia*



That was then . . .

The superintendent’s residence at Erwin NFH, built in 1903. USFWS photo.

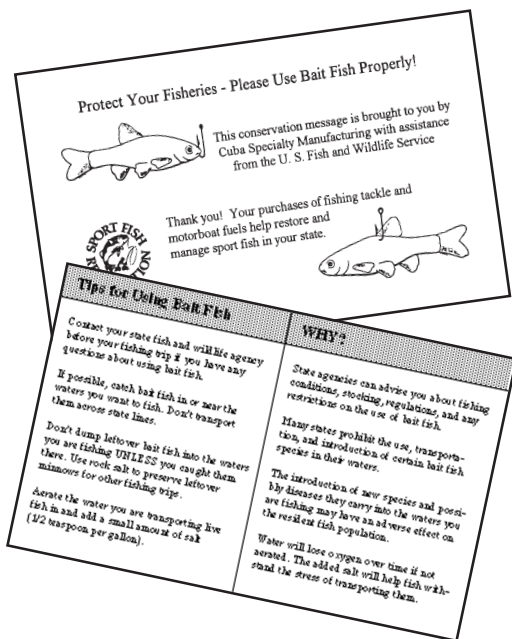
Service, Tackle Manufacturer Team Up to Protect Sport Fisheries

The Service has joined forces with a leading fishing tackle manufacturer to help educate anglers about the use of live bait and to protect America's sport fisheries.

Cuba Specialty Manufacturing Co., Inc., which produces minnow traps designed to hold live bait, will include an informational card about responsible use of live bait with each trap they sell. Service fisheries biologists worked with Cuba to develop the card, which is being paid for in part by Federal Aid dollars.

"We were very pleased to be able to assist with this project," said Bob Sousa, assistant regional director for Federal Aid for Region 5. "Providing anglers with information about how they can protect their fisheries resources is an important service."

Trapping minnows in one stream or lake and releasing them into another can have a negative impact on native fish populations, Sousa said. A new species may carry a new disease into the waters being fished. Because of this, many states prohibit the use, transportation and introduction of certain bait fish into their waters.



Refuge Administrators From Taiwan and America Share Experiences

An eight-member Taiwanese delegation gathering ideas for that island's fledgling wildlife refuge program visited six national wildlife refuges on the Chesapeake Bay and the East Coast this summer to study land management techniques for water bird conservation.

They also learned about environmental education, interpretive trails and citizen groups—American-style. The trip turned out to be enlightening not only for the Taiwanese but also for the staff at the refuges they visited during their week-long tour.

"Knowing other nations are interested in wildlife conservation for the same reasons we are makes you feel good," said Bill Koch, manager of Great Swamp NWR in New Jersey.

Dr. Hsiao-Wei Yuan from National Taiwan University led the delegation, which included other university faculty, representatives of Taiwan's provincial and county governments, and members of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office.

The Taiwanese began the tour by exchanging ideas with Service staff in Arlington about migratory bird management, the National Wildlife Refuge System and international affairs. Then they hit the road to tour Patuxent Research Refuge and Blackwater NWR in Maryland, Chincoteague NWR in Virginia, Prime Hook NWR in Delaware and New Jersey's Cape May and Edwin B. Forsythe refuges.

At every stop the visitors learned something different about managing a national wildlife refuge. At Chincoteague, the group was impressed with the intensive habitat management and diversity of birds. At Blackwater NWR, on Maryland's Eastern Shore, the delegates discussed how the manager dealt with nutria, a destructive non-native species.



Banding together

Wang-Cheng Lin (left) and Dr. Tzong-Shyan Lin, members of a Taiwanese delegation studying American national wildlife refuges, learn the basics of wood duck banding at Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in New Jersey. Photo by Amy Wing.

At Cape May refuge, discussion focused on land acquisition, particularly forests and fields for songbirds. Back down south, Prime Hook NWR Manager George O'Shea took the delegation on air boats to view sites in the largest freshwater impoundment on the East Coast.

Taiwan's nine wildlife refuges, totaling more than 10,000 acres, are dedicated to migratory birds, fish and rare plants. The first refuge in Taiwan, Penghu County Cat Islet Seabird Refuge, was established in 1991 to protect pristine, rocky cliffs inhabited by 44 species of seabirds.

"We are very excited about the things we are learning here," Dr. Yuan said, "and we are impressed with the refuge system, especially the managers, so knowledgeable and enthusiastic."

Amy Wing, Refuges, Arlington, Virginia

Refuge System Round-Up

Refuge Column Reaches Outdoor Writers

■ Lonnie Williamson, vice president of the Wildlife Management Institute and long-time member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, is spreading the word about the National Wildlife Refuge System among the association's 2,000 print, television, and radio journalists. In September, Williamson launched a monthly column in the association's magazine, *Outdoors Unlimited*, on the refuge system maintenance and operations backlog and the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement's (CARE) efforts to address the issue. In his first column, he writes, "OWAA members could greatly accelerate refuge restoration by informing their readers of the wildlife and recreational values of the refuge system and the CARE initiative to erase maintenance and operation backlogs."

Refuge Managers Embrace Technology for Outreach

■ Embracing technology is one of the goals outlined in the "Promises for a New Century" brochure on the National Wildlife Refuge System. Refuge staff nationwide have done just that this fall by inputting information on National Wildlife Refuge Week events on the Refuge Management Information System, Refuges' internal database. Todd Logan, Sean Furniss, and Debbie McCrensky in the Washington Office developed a template for this effort, and more than 200 refuges supplied event details for the most comprehensive source of information to date on Refuge Week events. This information was invaluable for Refuges staff members in strategizing outreach efforts for Refuge Week, especially planning Directorate participation in events and publicizing events with the news media.

Groups Help Refuges Make "Friends"

■ The Service, the National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Refuge Association, and the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation are promoting a national "Friends Initiative" to increase the number of non-profit refuge community coalitions. Twelve informational workshops for refuge staff are planned across the nation for 1998, eight by the NWRA and four by Audubon. In addition, experts will visit refuges planning to launch a "Friends" group to assist refuge staff and private citizens. "Friends" not only help refuges with wildlife conservation and

visitor services but also raise awareness about refuges in surrounding communities, Congress, and the news media. For more information, contact Allyson Rowell in the Division of Refuges, 703/358 1744.

Sand Lake NWR Manager Honored

■ The South Dakota Wildlife Federation presented John Koerner, manager of Sand Lake NWR and wetlands management district in South Dakota, its Conservationist of the Year award. The foundation honored Koerner for his efforts managing the Sand Lake refuge and wetlands management district, conservation efforts on behalf of the James River Valley, and work relating to the Garrison Diversion project. Arnie Goldade, president of the Sportsman's Club of Brown County, which nominated Koerner, said, "John Koerner has dedicated his life to wildlife and conservation. He also does a good job of maintaining harmony between sportsmen and landowners. He's always willing to work with all parties when it concerns wildlife."

Day Care Outreach a Success at Minnesota Valley NWR

■ A new environmental education program at Minnesota Valley NWR aimed at day care and preschool children is already a big hit in its first year with more than 1,400 children participating. Three to five-year-olds from the Twin Cities area take part in programs such as "Migration," "Squirrels," "Tracks and Traces," and "Terrific Trees." These programs involve discussions, puppetry, story-telling, games, and songs. Children then do projects such as making stick puppets of birds. Finally they take a half-mile hike on the refuge's nature trail where the children apply their new knowledge. For example, they look for wildlife or birds nests in the prairie, forest, and wetlands habitats. For more information, contact Kathryn Cassem at 612/854 5900.

Service Breaks Ground with Aircraft Tracking System

George Walters, a pilot at Yukon Delta NWR in Bethel, Alaska, taxied his Cessna 185 across Anchorage International Airport. He pulled onto the runway, took off and turned the plane toward Bethel, Alaska, 600 miles to the west. A few minutes after departing, Walters checked in with a group of observers to let them know he was safely airborne.

This was no ordinary plane ride for Walters. The group watching his takeoff from Anchorage was sitting in front of a computer in Bethel, where an image of his airplane's path was beamed via satellite to the screen. When Walters checked in with his waiting colleagues, the same satellite that showed his plane's progress on their computer allowed him to talk to them.

A reliable aircraft tracking system can reduce the time it takes to find downed, stranded or missing planes, saving both lives and money. The Service has been exploring methods to more accurately track planes and has become the first organization in the world to use this satellite system, according to Mike Rearden, the refuge's manager.

In 1996, the 19-million acre refuge began replacing its costly and outdated HF and FM radios, long used for field camp communications, with satellite technology that eliminates a ground-based communications system.

Instead, a geostationary satellite hovers 28,000 miles above the equator. The plane carries a transmitter linked to a global positioning system and a mini satellite dish that rotates to stay oriented to the orbiting satellite.

When accessed by computer, the satellite retrieves and downloads data from the GPS transmitter. The plane's location is displayed, overlaid with a moving topographic map to follow its progress, and the user can access updated information on the plane's heading, airspeed, altitude and flight path.

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This computerized satellite system has worked well for air-to-ground communications, and technicians continue to work out bugs in the tracking and transmitting system.

Still, Rearden is optimistic that the groundbreaking system will be an all-around success.

"The Fish & Wildlife Service can be proud of being the first organization in the world to put this technology together, especially when it assures an enhanced measure of flying safety for our employees," he said.

Paul Liedberg, Yukon Delta NWR, Bethel, Alaska



Pre-flight inspection

Pilot George Walters of Yukon Delta NWR inspects the satellite antenna mounted on the refuge's Cessna prior to a flight.
USFWS Photo.

Region 1 Newsletter Captures Communications Award

"Out and About," the quarterly outreach newsletter of the Service's Pacific region, was recognized in July by the Association for Conservation Information with a first place award in the internal communications category of ACI's annual awards competition. "Out and About" took top honors over 12 entries from seven state natural resources agencies, winning over entries from perennial favorites like the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Missouri Department of Conservation. The newsletter, an outgrowth of the Pacific region's outreach initiative, was created in 1995 to foster greater and more creative interaction between the public and the 1,500 employees of the six-state region. It is edited by Sheila McCartan of Nisqually NWR in Olympia, Washington; Tony Faast, regional outreach manager, and Lisa Remmild, a visual information specialist in the region's division of Refuges and Wildlife, assist in its production.

In other ACI awards categories, the Service's new hunter safety television public service announcement won first place in its category over seven other entries from five agencies and the color publication, "National Wildlife Refuge System/Promises for a New Century" won third place in the one-time publications category. In the same category, the Service's "Tallgrass Prairie Challenge" publication tied for eleventh place.

New Book Highlights ESA Success Stories

A new children's book published by the National Geographic Society, "There's Still Time: The Success of the Endangered Species Act," features a forward by Secretary Babbitt. It is now available in bookstores, from Publishers Group West at 1-800-788-3123 or from National Geographic Society at 1-800-NGS-LINE. This book was produced in cooperation with both the Service and the Secretary's office.

Libraries Get Hooked on Fishing

Two western Massachusetts public libraries celebrated National Fishing Week in the Connecticut River watershed by adding fishing tackle to their loan programs. The M.N. Spear Memorial Library in rural Shutesbury and the Holyoke Public Library in the city of Holyoke initiated Fishing Tackle Library Loaner programs courtesy of the

American Sportfishing Association and the Service's Connecticut River Coordinator's office. The Holyoke Public Library began its fishing Tackle Library Loaner Program with funding from the Connecticut River coordinator and a community fishing organization called Fishing Buddies. Similar programs have been successfully established in 15 other states.

Artifact Smuggler Caught, Fined

In what law enforcement agents call the biggest artifact seizure and forfeiture the Service has been involved with in Alaska, agents seized bone and ivory, lip and nose jewelry, stone points and other items from the Washington home of a former contractor at Alaska Maritime NWR. John M. Wells, 54, who worked on the Shemya Island unit of the refuge, in the Bering Sea paid a \$500 fine for violations of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act after he collected more than 150 artifacts while he worked there during the summers of 1992, 1993 and 1994 as a contractor for the Air Force. According to Service archaeologist Debra Corbett, the cost to restore and repair the dig sites is at least \$31,000. The archaeological value of the land alone is more than \$273,000, she said. Violations of the Archaeological Resource Protection Act can result in sentences of up to five years in jail and a \$250,000 fine.

Congresswoman Praises Mingo Job Corps Center

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri praised the Service's Mingo Job Corps Center in Puxico, Missouri, after a recent visit, proclaiming that it was her great privilege to be able to serve in a district that includes the center. She said that she wished there were more opportunities and centers like Mingo available to "at risk" youth. Acting Center Director Steve Fowler, Vocational Director Larry Carda and Student Government President Regina Ward escorted Rep. Emerson around the Mingo campus, where she observed all 10 vocational trades in action. She later toured the education building, on which students are completing construction.

Florida Refuge Manager Receives NASA Award

Merritt Island NWR manager Ron Hight received the NASA Exceptional Service Medal in June for his leadership in helping the Kennedy Space Center to convert 1,500 acres of commercial citrus groves into

... In Brief (cont'd)

Director's Corner



property to an area that researches reusable and organically-supported agricultural practices. Kennedy Space Center Director Roy Bridges presented Hight with the award at a June 4 ceremony. The award cites Hight for "leadership... and outstanding willingness in supporting the center's mission while still protecting the wildlife refuge." Merritt Island NWR was established in 1963 on the Kennedy Space Center to protect and manage the wildlife that makes its home in the shadow of the space shuttle, including manatees, sea turtles, bald eagles and wood storks.

New Video Highlights the Benefits of Partnerships

"Together We Can," a new Service video produced by the Division of Refuges, the National Conservation Training Center and the Public Affairs office, highlights the successful cooperative efforts of people committed to working together to protect wildlife habitat. For example, in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, a birding festival brings thousands of dollars into local economies every year thanks to cooperation among the Service, local officials, chambers of commerce and other partners. And in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the Service has greatly extended its ability to protect the bay's ecosystem by teaching other interested groups how to restore riparian areas. The Service both leads and supports its partners in understanding the connections between local actions on the ground and the long-term impacts of these actions on natural resources. "Together We Can" illustrates the role the Service takes in these partnerships and can be used as an outreach tool to promote more cooperative efforts. "Together We Can" is available from regional Public Affairs offices.

September turned out to be quite a month for the Service. Congress passed landmark organic legislation for the refuge system that the President signed on October 9th. In addition, four key senators introduced bipartisan legislation (S. 1180) to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act, signaling hope for the end of a five-year political standoff. Both events rightly received a great deal of publicity.

There was, however, a third victory for conservation in September that didn't get much press. Due to the efforts of Federal Aid staff working with Congress and outside partners, state wildlife agencies will get \$12 million in Federal Aid grants in the coming year they wouldn't have otherwise received.

Here is how it happened. The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program, or Pittman-Robertson, is funded by excise taxes on firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Internal Revenue Service collects these taxes and transfers them to the Service for distribution to the states as grants for wildlife conservation and hunter education programs.

Last December, the IRS decided to switch from monthly transfers to quarterly transfers on the archery equipment portion of the excise tax. While the IRS carried out the switch, it decided to withhold the receipts collected on archery equipment between January 1997 and September 1997. Because of this decision, states that were dependent on these funds for their conservation and hunter education programs were not going to receive them for 1998.

Federal Aid staff recognized the problem this would create for the states and went to work to convince the IRS to release the money. It was a close call, but with the great support of Rep. John Tanner of Tennessee, they succeeded. The International

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies and the Archery Manufacturers and Merchants Organization also assisted in the effort.

The IRS decided not only to release the \$12 million but also to return to the monthly excise tax transfers. The Service reinvests the Pittman-Robertson funds until it distributes them to the states, and the interest, by law, supports grant programs under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Therefore, the decision by the IRS to provide the funds each month will allow the Service to generate about \$800,000 to \$1 million more in interest annually for wetlands conservation programs.

I mention this in my column because it is emblematic of the quiet victories Service employees win for conservation every day just by simply doing their jobs and doing them well. In this case, it was our Federal Aid employees; on another day, it will be a hatchery manager, a refuge, ecological services or migratory bird biologist, or a law enforcement agent. Day by day, we are winning quiet conservation victories.

At my formal swearing in at Patuxent Research Refuge, I noted that nobody goes into the field of wildlife biology for the money, the prestige or the corner office with a view. We go into this field out of a deep love for wild places and wild creatures. We are stewards of something that is precious and irreplaceable.

The victories we win for conservation frequently occur in wetlands, forests, rivers or farm fields and sometimes in marbled halls. The world doesn't always find out about them. But our nation's fish and wildlife benefit from them. And that's what counts.

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