



U.S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service

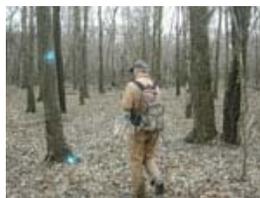
# Southeast Region

## SOUTHEASTERN CURRENTS

AUGUST 2009 NEWSLETTER

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### Restoration and management of forested wetlands: Application of Strategic Habitat Conservation framework



Jamie Kellum marks timber for harvest. Photo by Jeff Denman.

The forested wetlands of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley are a national treasure, home to nationally significant waterfowl and songbird populations, rare species such as the Louisiana black bear, and ivory-billed woodpecker, and diverse and unique habitats, people, and cultures. Over the last two decades, partners within the Valley have been working to develop and implement conservation actions to better restore and manage forested wetlands.

The objective is to restore and maintain wetland functions and to conserve sustainable populations of wildlife species dependent upon these forested wetlands. In pursuit of this goal, partners have embraced the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) business model of interdependent collaboration with myriad government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private individual partners. These entities are developing and implementing conservation actions framed by SHC's functional elements of biological planning, conservation design, conservation delivery and actions, outcome-based monitoring, and assumption-driven research.

So why is the Mississippi Alluvial Valley so important? It was once a vast, functioning 24-million-acre bottomland hardwood forest ecosystem. Due to large-scale deforestation as a result of increased agricultural production and hydrologic alterations in the name of flood control, only about four million acres of bottomland hardwood forest exist today. As a result, species dependent upon large areas of bottomland forest at a landscape scale, and complex forest structure within forest stands, have declined. Using this as a backdrop, Partners in Flight developed a conservation plan for forest interior songbirds based on a forest patch size model. Results from this modeling effort suggested that patches of 10,000 acres, 20,000 acres, and 100,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest are required to support sustainable populations of priority forest interior bird species such as Swainson's warbler, cerulean warbler, and swallow-tailed kite, respectively.

With Partners in Flight planning efforts, staff from the U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Unit and the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Office developed a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based, decision support tool to select the best locations for building larger blocks of forest through the process of reforestation. Similarly, the Louisiana Black Bear Recovery Team, working through the Black Bear Conservation Committee, developed priority areas to facilitate restoration efforts. Both of these tools have been incorporated into the ranking process for U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Bill Programs (e.g., Wetland Reserve Program) to better focus restoration activities on privately-owned lands.

In 2007, the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture partnership released its compilation of forested wetland restoration and management recommendations entitled "Restoration, Management and Monitoring of Forest Resources in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley: Recommendations for Enhancing Wildlife Habitat" (often abbreviated as the "Desired Forest Conditions" document). In the short time since its release, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), State Wildlife Agencies, and several non-governmental

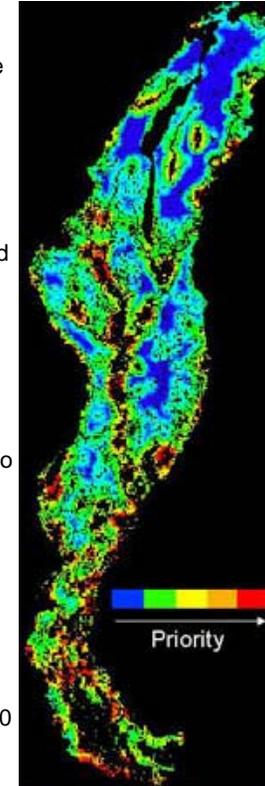
organizations (e.g., Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy) have been working together to implement these recommendations.

For example, the Service's Migratory Bird Program field office in Jackson, Mississippi, annually hosts a Birding Bootcamp to coordinate monitoring efforts and expose to: (1) bird identification; (2) bird-habitat relationships; and (3) restoration and management recommendations targeted at bird conservation. Due to the success of this year's Birding Bootcamp with staff from Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP), a follow-up forest management workshop was held at O'Keefe Wildlife Management Area. Forestry staff from White River National Wildlife Refuge and the Jackson Migratory Bird Program field office worked closely with staff from MDWFP to organize and coordinate the workshop.

At the workshop, MDWFP staff was briefed on the DFC recommendations, wildlife habitat objectives and the current line-of-thinking on marking timber targeted at enhancing wildlife habitat (i.e., wildlife-based forestry vs. production-based forestry) in a classroom setting. This was followed by a real-life timber marking activity in which MDWFP workshop attendees were separated into groups, and an FWS employee facilitated the timber marking process. In an effort to make sure the workshop was a fully educational hands-on learning experience, the following day the attendees performed the timber-marking. To continue the educational process, additional workshops are currently being planned to review past forest management activities and expose additional conservation partners (e.g., U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) to the concept of Desired Forest Conditions and wildlife-based forestry, as well as to facilitate inter- and intra-agency coordination and communication.

In the future, as land managers implement forest management strategies to achieve Desired Forest Conditions, it is very important that a coordinated monitoring program be designed and implemented such that forest management prescriptions can be evaluated and modified following the principles of adaptive management. To this extent, the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture partnership designed and implemented a large-scale, forest breeding bird monitoring program to assess avian response to forest management actions. An objective of this monitoring program is to answer questions such as, "when do wildlife populations increase or decrease following timber harvest?" Over the last four years, employees on National Wildlife Refuges and State Wildlife Management Areas have evaluated more than 250 forest management treatments representing more than 1,500 individual point counts. All data is being stored and managed by USGS-Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD with analytical support provided by USGS-Patuxent Wildlife Research Station in Vicksburg, MS. Data obtained from this monitoring program will provide land managers information needed to adjust management prescriptions to better facilitate or enhance habitat needs of priority wildlife species.

Conservation partners in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley have utilized the functional elements of Strategic Habitat Conservation to guide and facilitate the development and implementation of: biological planning activities (development of population and habitat objectives); conservation design (spatially-explicit decision support tools); conservation actions and /delivery (clearly articulated desired forest conditions); and an outcome-based monitoring program (coordinated bird monitoring in relation to forest management) in pursuit of landscapes capable of sustaining populations of priority wildlife species. Additionally, conservation partners have embraced the conservation business model aspect of SHC to increase inter- and intra-agency coordination as well as inter-disciplinary training and communication (i.e., increased coordination among biologists and foresters). As a result of this increased communication, there now are biologists capable of marking timber for harvest and foresters capable of conducting point count-based bird surveys. Although partners have made great strides in advancing conservation of forested wetlands in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley, there are still myriad unanswered questions and uncertainties that need to be addressed through directed research such that underlying models, assumptions, and management strategies can be revised based on outputs of coordinated monitoring and research programs and adapted-based changing environmental and climatic conditions. Nevertheless, the SHC concept has provided an invaluable framework by which to organize the intellectual thoughts, resources, and collective capabilities of individual partners in pursuit of sustainable landscapes.



A decision support tool to prioritize reforestation efforts across the Mississippi Alluvial Valley. The colors represent the prioritization scheme. The warmer the color the higher the priority. Map created by staff within the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture Office.

Submitted by Randy Wilson, Project Leader, Migratory Bird Program Field Office, Jackson, Mississippi

## Behind the Scenes--



Mark Cantrell, far left, of the Service's Asheville, North Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office shows students how to herd fish toward a fishing weir. Photo courtesy of Smoky Mountain News.

### Cherokee youth re-enact ancient fishing practice

As 10-year-old Dayini Lossie stood on the shore eyeing the wide shallow waters of the Tuckasegee River last week listening to the marching orders for the exercise about to unfold, one word came to mind: awesome.

Lossie had never heard of a fish weir before, but now he was about to walk in his ancestors' footsteps, using the same stone wall his people built centuries ago to once again — hopefully — trap some fish.

"The objective is to herd the fish, stomping and screaming and basically scaring them downstream," explained Mark Cantrell, a biologist with U.S. Fish and Wildlife.

Lossie, along with two dozen other Cherokee students, couldn't wait. They'd been in and out of the river all day, their shoes, shirts and shorts soaked through many times over as they swam, splashed and explored aquatic biology along the way.

But as they waded into the river this time, stringing themselves out in a long line and facing the ancient weir downstream, they realized they were part of something big.

"We're learning about our history and how our ancestors used the river," Lossie said.

As the students began moving downstream, flushing the fish toward a trap at the mouth of the weir, it didn't exactly go off without a hitch. One student would fall, then another, then suddenly the chain would disintegrate leaving big gaps for the fish to sneak through. Some started splashing each other instead of the water in front of them. Others took intermittent breaks to float on their backs.

But eventually, the line closed in on the weir and two modest-sized fish were ushered into the trap.

"We all would have starved if this was dinner tonight," Cantrell declared.

It became apparent just how much cooperation a fish weir entailed.

"I learned so much myself," said Roger Clapp, director of the Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee River, which coordinated the event. "Though it is obvious, you could really see how Cherokee fishing at a weir is a community experience, not just one, two or three people."

The re-enactment was orchestrated by WATR, an environmental group whose central focus is water quality. Funding came from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, World Wildlife Fund, the Royal Bank of Canada and WATR. To help pull off the re-enactment, biologists with the Cherokee Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and several volunteers with WATR pitched in.

The field trip brought kids not only in touch with their heritage, but the ecosystem, Clapp said.

Armed with nets and buckets, kids took to the river upturning rocks and sifting through sediment in search of crawdads, bugs and fish lurking below the surface. A science station allowed them to examine their finds under microscopes.

“The creek bottom underneath them is actually teeming with life,” said Clapp. “It is a living ecological unit.”

The students also got to hear a program from Russ Townsend, a historic preservation officer for the Cherokee, who quizzed them on the role rivers played for their ancestors, which included everything from transportation to the gathering of mussel shells that were ground up and mixed with clay for pottery.

“The Cherokee were very smart. They knew how to use the environment. They loved living here because they could get everything they needed and the rivers were a major source of that,” said Townsend

*Written by Becky Johnson, Smoky Mountain News, Waynesboro, North Carolina*

*This article appeared in the Smoky Mountain News during the week of July 8, 2009. It is reprinted with the permission of Becky Johnson of the Smoky Mountain News.*

## ***Bragging Rights --***



Louisville, Kentucky, Trout Unlimited Chapter President George Smith instructs an introductory fly fishing workshop participant on the intricacies of tying a fly and prepping one's rod correctly. Photo by Amanda Patrick.

### **Trout Unlimited partners with Wolf Creek for fly fishing fun**

An ongoing annual partnership continues to provide for plenty of fly-fishing fun thanks to the hard work and positive volunteer spirit of members in the Louisville, Kentucky, chapter of Trout Unlimited. For three years, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery and TU members planned and offered a bevy of events, all geared towards teaching fly fishing and the fun of being out on the water. Whether offering free introductory workshops on fly tying and fly fishing, leading hatchery VIP's on fishing excursions on the Cumberland River, or setting up a booth at the hatchery's annual Earth Day Celebration, the members of Trout Unlimited continue to provide support to the hatchery, especially in its outreach mission and goals.

*Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky*



Fly tying is definitely a family affair as this father and son enjoy an introductory fly tying class at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. Photo by Amanda Patrick.



L to R: Debbie DeVore, Melody Ray-Culp, Nicole Adimey. Photo by Connie Cassler.

### **Florida Living Shoreline workshops successful**

The Florida Coastal Program coordinators (Debbie DeVore from south Florida, with assistance from Connie Cassler and Nicole Adimey, both from North Florida; and Melody Ray-Culp from the Panhandle) recently coordinated and co-hosted two Living Shorelines workshops. These workshops were designed to introduce the idea of Living Shorelines to a wide variety of audience members, including public and private land managers, property owners, city and county commissioners, planning staff, environmental regulators, contractors, and others interested in effective and ecologically-sound shoreline protection methods that do not harden the coast. Other topics included permitting considerations and incentive

opportunities for these types of projects.

On May 28, 2009, the first workshop was held in Port Orange and approximately 140 people were in attendance. Just the next week, on June 3, 2009, the second workshop was held in Naples, Florida, with about 100 attendees. Feedback indicates that both workshops were great successes. The Coastal Program is now taking the lead to develop a "Living Shorelines Cookbook" to assist those interested in planning, permitting, and constructing these types of projects.

*Submitted by Debbie DeVore, South Florida Coastal Program Coordinator, Vero Beach, Florida*

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### **Fire in the land of Aussie**

You have probably heard of the many fires in Australia in 2009. The firestorms that swept across the state of Victoria on February 7, 2009, were unprecedented in intensity, ferocity, and scale. They destroyed families and communities across Victoria and inflicted a terrible loss on all, including 200 human fatalities.

Two United States (US) Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) teams arrived in Australia on Sunday, February 15, 2009, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists. I was privileged to serve on one of the teams. The teams were greeted by the U.S. Consulate General Michael Thurston at the Melbourne International Airport. Both teams had been requested by the Australian government to assist, supplement, and support Victoria State agencies in their bushfire recovery efforts.

Each BAER team is composed of a variety of specialists such as soil scientists, hydrologists, geologists, biologists, geographic information system specialists, archeologist, botanists, and forester. BAER teams are very experienced specialists who are highly effective in conducting rapid assessments and analyses.

The main mission of the BAER team's assessments in Australia was to document the effects of the fires, suppression activities, proposed stabilization treatments, and potential post fire flooding and sediment delivery to natural resources. In addition, they worked with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and Parks Victoria (PV) to assess public and private lands and analyze post-fire effects that could threaten assets-at-risk from potential floods, erosion, and slips. The BAER teams also shared and exchanged methodology and procedures with local resource managers. Both BAER teams worked with the USGS Earth Resources Observation and Science Center (EROS) and Forest Service Remote Sensing Applications Center (RSAC) to provide Burned Area Reflectance Classification (BARC) maps which assist the BAER teams in developing soil burn severity map resources.

Two United States Fish and Wildlife Service employees, Kenneth Griggs and Lisa Jameson, Wildlife Biologists for the Burned Area Emergency Response Team, assisted in the assessment of habitat conditions post-fire for several threatened and endangered species, one being the Leadbeater's possum.

The Leadbeater's Possum is the State of Victoria's wildlife emblem. Known as "fairies of the forest" the possum weighs as little as 4¼ ounces (120 grams) which is less than an apple, and 12½ inches (32 centimeters) from tip of nose to tail. The possums emerge from their nests shortly after dark and rapidly disperse through the forest in search of food. Tree crickets, beetles, and other insects make up about a third of their diet with the remaining being deprived from eucalypt nectar and tree sap.

The Leadbeater's Possum is endangered and is thought to be restricted to a limited area within tall mountain ash (Eucalyptus species) forest in the Eastern Highlands of Australia where the Kilmore East Murrindindi Complex North Fire has burned 625,000



Dead Leadbeater's Possum, Lake Mountain in Victoria's Yarra Ranges National Park. Photo by Steve Smith, Department of Sustainability and Environment.

acres (253,000 hectares) of forest, woodland, and pasture.



Steve Smith, Department of Sustainability and Environment placing new plastic wood nest boxes in Leadbeater's Possum habitat after the fire. Photo by Doug Beckers, New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service.

The possum, a cryptic arboreal marsupial, that nests in old growth tree hollows, has lost most of its habitat to the wildfires. Recovery nest boxes were placed in known Leadbeater's Possum territory to replace the loss of these nesting hollows, and to replace existing monitoring nest boxes which were consumed in the fire.

Since European settlement, a total of 65 percent of Victoria's forest cover has been cleared. Only five percent of public lands remain forested. Fire is a natural component of the Australian landscape and has been an important factor in shaping the composition, structure, and distribution of the vegetation types existing today. In many instances, maintaining these vegetation types, the habitat they provide for species of flora and fauna, and the ecological processes they support is reliant on fire playing a continuing role.

All efforts were in collaboration with biologists from the Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE), Parks Victoria, and New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife. BAER Team Wildlife Specialists will continue to work with local resource experts to determine the direct and indirect fire impacts to Leadbeater's Possums and other wildlife species within and downstream of the fire area.

*Submitted by Lisa Jameson, A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Boynton Beach, Florida*

### Chinese conservation officials discover mitigation banking

Connie Cassler doesn't speak Chinese, but she was still able to get a group of conservation officials from China to understand and embrace the concept of mitigation banking.

Connie, a biologist with the South Florida Ecological Services Office, accompanied the six-member Chinese delegation May 16, on a tour of the Everglades Wetland Mitigation Bank (EWMB) near Florida Power and Light's Turkey Point Power Plant south of Miami. The visit was part of an ongoing nearly 23-year-old exchange program between the United States and China, designed to broaden cooperation in the field of nature conservation.



Members of the Chinese delegation and their American hosts pose for a group photo before entering a south Florida restaurant for lunch. Photo by Julia Su.

During the tour, Connie told them about mitigation banks, which are created to offset impacts to wetlands regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Clean Water Act. The mitigation bank owner sells credits to developers whose projects will impact these types of ecosystems at other locations.

"They had an interpreter with them, so I believe they got it," said Connie. "They certainly asked all the right questions and spent some quality time discussing what was a novel concept for them."

Qingxiang Liao, one of the delegates, commented, "U.S. wetland laws were made clear to us and are a good reference in the future. Funding for wetlands conservation seems quite sufficient in the U.S., including such arrangements as wetlands mitigation banking."

They liked the concept so much that the leader of their delegation, Guangren Ma, called the tour of the Everglades Wetland Mitigation Bank one of the most beneficial portions of their visit. He asked for more information on mitigation banking and noted, "We are very impressed with U.S. laws and policies and strictness about wetlands conservation."

Connie is gathering information to send them. "I'm happy to do it because they're looking to us for help in protecting their wetlands," she said. "Florida Power and Light is doing a good job down there. They've created an outstanding crocodile habitat. We saw quite a few American crocodiles. It was good to be able to show our guests a successful wetlands restoration project."

Spencer Simon, Assistant Field Supervisor for Ecological Services, was complimentary of Connie's efforts. "She was a great ambassador. The success of this visit would not have occurred without Connie's great work," he said.

The Chinese delegation spent about two weeks in the U.S. In addition to the EWMB, the Chinese delegation visited sites including Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, and Lake Okeechobee in Florida and Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. Their next U.S. visit is scheduled for the spring and summer of 2010.

*Submitted by Ken Warren, South Florida Ecological Services Field Office, Vero Beach, Florida*



Rick Herren and Trish Adams enjoy the sun and the sand at the beach in Vero Beach after Rick completed a survey of sea turtle nests. Rick uses the vehicle to help him travel the 11.5-mile stretch of beach he patrols in Indian River County. Photo by Ken Warren.

### **Indian River County, Service partner on beachfront lighting initiative**

Biologists Trish Adams of the Service's South Florida Ecological Services Office and Rick Herren of Indian River County's Coastal Engineering Section are facilitating a program that protects sea turtles and their nesting areas along the county's beaches.

One of the key elements of this program -- officially called the Indian River County Shoreline Armoring Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) -- is helping reduce and ultimately eliminate beachfront lights that could disorient sea turtle hatchlings as they make their way to the ocean. "The HCP calls for appropriate mitigation for sea turtles to offset take," said Trish. "In this case, we're accomplishing mitigation by diminishing beachfront lighting."

Their fight in this effort was aided by a \$174,000 grant the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded the county. The grant money was used to restore beachfront habitat after the destructive 2004 -

2005 hurricane season.

According to Rick, who sought the grant, it allowed the county to plant vegetation that was lost and to fix or restructure public lights that became more visible after the hurricanes changed the shape of the beach. "We planted a lot of sea grapes on private properties and worked with the city to change public lights on streets and parks so they can no longer be seen from the beach," he said.

Funds from the grant were used to upgrade to more sea turtle friendly lighting at areas in Indian River County including Jaycee Park and Conn Beach, and also along Ocean Drive, State Road A1A and Reef Road. In addition, lights at Sexton Plaza and Humiston Park were and/or will be changed as part of ongoing redesign projects.

Rick says that although the lighting program takes a lot of time and effort, it greatly benefits sea turtles. "I conduct nesting surveys under the HCP for the south part of the county. We get about 7,000 to 11,000 crawls in this county every summer. The beachfront lighting program is a good thing for the hatchlings."

Trish looks at these projects as great starts. "We're making progress toward protecting a variety of imperiled species including loggerhead, green, and leatherback sea turtles. The county and City of Vero Beach are to be commended for what they've done so far. It's going to make it easier for us to address issues related to beachfront lighting on commercial and private properties," she said.

Submitted by Ken Warren, South Florida Ecological Services Field Office, Vero Beach, Florida

### Traveling to North Carolina? Watch black bears from a distance

These are healthy times for the Eastern North Carolina black bear. Their numbers are growing, their habitat is lush, their activity after the winter is healthy and evident. Because bears are doing well, there are more opportunities for people to observe them.

"This is both a blessing and a curse," said Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Services Manager Bonnie Strawser. "It's quite a treat for most folks to be able to see a bear in a wild setting anywhere east of the Mississippi. So, this is a wonderful opportunity we're able to offer visitors to the Outer Banks. Unfortunately, some people just don't understand how dangerous it is to feed a bear. It's dangerous for people; but, it's also deadly for the bear. Most wildlife biologists will tell you a 'fed bear is a dead bear'."



Eastern North Carolina black bear.  
Photo by Jeff Lewis.

"This is the time of year when bears might be seen along the highways near Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge," said Dennis Stewart, refuge wildlife biologist, cautioning visitors to respect the fact that bears are wild animals. Some are aggressive, and female bears with cubs "can become very anxious if they perceive a threat to their young."

According to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina has a healthy population of black bears, with hundreds of bears in Dare and Hyde counties alone. There are populations both in the mountains and along the coast, and bears are also gradually spreading into the Piedmont area. Their range appears to be increasing.

Stewart added, "the bear being fed by people next to a highway is getting a triple whammy of bad luck. The 'trained, but not tame' bear then hangs out around the highway waiting for people in vehicles to feed it. The innocent traveling public who are not interested in feeding the bear are more likely to hit the bear with their vehicle because of where it's hanging out. Those feeding and stopping to observe the bear are more likely to get hurt by the bear - it's a large wild animal."

"Finally, the kind of foods people feed to bears is not providing appropriate nutrition for the animal. The bear's physiological and behavioral responses to environmental stress may not be adequate for survival. Once the bear has been lured by people into bad habits, it becomes a danger to people, and it will have to be killed - not good for the bear and a loss for people who want to responsibly enjoy observing a bear."

Females guarding their young are also aggressive as a protective means. "You just don't ever want to get between a mother and her young. So, how do you know if you're between them? If you see a cub, pay attention, don't go anywhere near it, and know that the mother is someplace not far away," said Stewart. "Bears are intelligent, have keen senses of smell and hearing, but fairly poor vision. They can usually see movement, but might not be able to determine what it is," he said.

Male bears can grow to 700 to 800 pounds, although they are considered large at 500 to 600 pounds. Females generally average between 200 to 250 pounds in the fall, about 100 pounds lighter this time of year. Given that size, it's hard to comprehend that they weigh 8 to 10 ounces at birth, with two young the average number in a litter. Although the young leave their dens sometime in March or April, when they are approximately two to three months old, they continue to feed on mother's milk until they are around six months old, and grow quickly. Bear cubs seen at this time of year probably weigh between 10 and 15 pounds, or the size of a healthy house cat. Adult females are also breeding this time of year, reaching their peak in late June. After several days together, the male and female will separate and he will seek out another female. The fertilized egg she is carrying is then in suspended animation within her womb until November, when the embryo attaches to the uterus. Birth is generally six weeks later in mid- to late January. Life expectancy is generally between 5 and 8 years, although bears in the wild have been determined to be as much as 32 years of age.

A good place to see black bears just before dark is the Wildlife Drive on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

*Submitted by Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River Refuge Complex, Manteo, North Carolina*

### Trout-tastic fishing fun at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery



Catch a Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby participants. FWS Photo.

After months of planning and hard work, the twenty-third annual Catch a Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby offered fantastic fishing, smiling faces, jumping trout, and memories to last a lifetime. On Saturday, June 6, more than 3,500 people, including 1,675 kids, attended the event at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery. The annual celebration, part of National Fishing and Boating Week, began in 1986 and has blossomed into one of the largest events of its kind in the country.

The event is designed as a fun-filled way to get kids aged from 1 to 15 years-old outdoors and interested in fishing. Several booths and activities were provided for participants' enjoyment, including a boat simulator provided by FLW Outdoors, and archery sports offered through the local Ducks Unlimited chapter. Everyone also enjoyed all the hot dogs, sodas, bottled water, cotton candy, and popcorn they could eat, and each child was given a goodie bag full of treats. Derby participants aged 5 and over also had their choice of one of the following: a rod and reel, a tackle box, a sleeping bag, or a tent. Younger participants enjoyed their own rod and reel sets as prizes at the kiddie pool.

As in past years, this derby was made possible through the generous support and contributions of many local, regional, and national sponsors and businesses. For 2009, a total of 21 major sponsors donated at least \$1,000 in either cash or items. Countless other organizations gave of their time and resources. A total of 140 volunteers participated, making the derby it a true example of the positive benefits of partnering. Through such teamwork, an event with a value of \$40,213.91 occurred with little or no cost to any one agency, due to the generous donations of a myriad of individuals and organizations. More photos in [Photo Album](#).



A little boy shows his prize, metal, and fish from his time at the kiddie pool. FWS Photo.

*Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky*



Grant Gifford rappels into the fire on Klamath National Forest. Photo by Mark Whitehead, Scott Valley Rappel Crew

### Grant Gifford: South Florida wildland fire leader

In 2008, Grant Gifford, lead firefighter for the A.R. M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, had another dream year as a Fish and Wildlife Service firefighter. In 2007, Grant was the first Service employee to work for the Redding Interagency Hotshot crew, a crew devoted to not only fighting fire in some of the most rugged landscapes in the United States but also a crew designated as a Fireline Leadership training crew.

During the summer of 2008, Grant used the training he had received with the Redding crew, as well as his experiences with fire in Florida, to once again represent the Service in a unique way. Grant spent three months with the Klamath National Forest's helicopter rappel module. This crew rappels into small fires in remote locations to stop them before they can become the large fires that have become commonplace in the last several years.

In the firefighting world, many will argue that these remote fires should be allowed to burn as part of an appropriate management response; however, many times when drought conditions exist, firefighting overhead is stretched thin, or resources may be threatened, it is sometimes the appropriate response to put a fire out. When this is the case, it gives a manager confidence knowing that there are firefighters that have the experience and skills to swing underneath a helicopter, jump out of an airplane, or just walk to a fire and stop it.

During Grant's time on the Klamath National Forest's crew he completed several operational rappels and was several times chosen to be the incident commander on the fires he was assigned. Needless to say, this was a great experience for Grant.

So you may be asking yourself at this point, what does the Service get out of this? Grant has used his new skills to help refine the aviation and fire program at Loxahatchee. Aviation safety has been drilled into the rappel crew every day since his return, flight procedures have been honed, refinements have been made to operational procedures and a downed helicopter simulation was conducted. Although a firefighter for only a few years Grant is now looked upon as a leader on prescribed fires and wildfires in Florida, as an Engine Boss he is now being asked to assist the burn boss in managing all holding forces on fires and will soon be directing firing operations on large prescribed burns. He is also training new firefighters by serving as an instructor for the Basic Firefighter, Basic Fire Behavior and Advanced Firefighter classes.



Grant Gifford on the fire line.  
Photo by Collins Bonds,  
Redding IHC

Was it hard to do without Grant for several months? Yes! The Loxahatchee refuge fire staff consists of only two employees. Loxahatchee averages five to seven wildfires a year from lightning; frequently these fires can exceed 1,000 acres and the refuge is striving to reach 30,000 acres of prescribed fire per year. Grant spent eight months with Redding and three months with Klamath. The skills he brought back are priceless. Grant has become a leader in the Southeast Region's fire program.

*Submitted by Rolf Olson, A.R.M. Loxahatchie National Wildlife Refuge, Boynton Beach, Florida*



Boardwalk at the Alcovy  
Conservation Center. Photo by  
Deborah Harris.

### Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program connects kids with nature

The Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF) received funding through the Partners Program this year to provide public access and opportunities for recreational and educational use of fish and wildlife resources at the 115-acre Alcovy Conservation Center in Covington, Georgia. The first project was a boardwalk through the swamp with interpretive signs along the way for the Kid S.W.A.P Initiative, "Stewarding Wildlife and Plants." This initiative brings the priority actions of the Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) down to child-level with educational materials, interpretive signs, and hands-on activities. On the boardwalk, kids walk through priority habitats, such as forested wetlands and rivercane. Although it was recently finished, the boardwalk already is being used by many children, youth groups, teachers, and families.

"People walking the boardwalk may see signs of otter, raccon, turkey, or deer," says Terry Tatum of GWF. If quiet, they may see the resident doe with triplet fawns. They can hear a bird-voiced tree frog, and many birds, including Swainson's warbler and Prothonotary warbler. They are likely to see crayfish, amphibians, salamanders, anoles, lizards, and fox squirrels."

Next year, a bird window, modeled after the nationally- recognized window at the Birdsong Nature Center in Thomasville, Georgia, will be constructed in the Wingsong Classroom at the Alcovy Conservation Center. Landscaping using native bird-friendly plants and a water feature will be installed outside the window to maximize viewing opportunities. GWF also will construct a fishing deck and make camping platforms for families who participate in



YMCA group visits the new  
boardwalk. Photo by Robert  
Phillips, GWF.

the overnight Kid S.W.A.P. programs.

*Submitted by Deborah Harris, Georgia Ecological Services Field Office, Athens, Georgia*



Nicole Chadwick (Department of Defense) and Jason Ayers (FWS) prepare to retrieve the lone female RCW from transport case. Photo by Moigan Wolf.

### Army's Fort Jackson training center home to an endangered bird

Sandy Island, located between the Waccamaw and Pee Dee Rivers in Georgetown County, supports a relatively large red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) population. This island of over 9,000 acres is currently owned by the South Carolina Department of Transportation and is managed by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). This past February, TNC biologists happened upon an injured RCW that was unable to fly at the base of a tree. The bird was taken to the Center for Birds of Prey in Awendaw, South Carolina, for assessment.

The Center for Birds of Prey typically is a rehabilitation center for raptors. Luckily, the center recently hired Keely Bargnesi as their clinic director. Although Keely had never worked with an RCW before, she did have experience with other, similar woodpeckers. Keely and the Center for Birds of Prey agreed to take the RCW in hopes of rehabilitating it. Upon closer examination it was determined that the RCW, a female, had a fractured wing near its base.

The RCW spent the next 40 days at the center being nursed back to health. When the bird's bandages were removed, it appeared as if her ability to fly was hindered. There was some thought about finding a home for her in a zoo or similar facility but RCWs typically do not do well in those conditions. A collective decision was made to release the bird back into the wild and give her a chance to survive on her own. The next stop was the U.S. Army's Ft. Jackson training center.

The 50,000-acre training center located southeast of Columbia, South Carolina, contains significant longleaf pine habitat and a growing RCW population. Nicole Chadwick, a biologist who intensively monitors the RCW population at Ft. Jackson, found a site with a solitary male and no other females, the most suitable condition for this bird's release.

Charleston Field Office biologists picked up the RCW from the Center of Birds of Prey and made the two-hour drive to Ft. Jackson. Upon arrival at the release site, a solitary male RCW could be heard vocalizing in the distance. The female RCW was quickly banded with a unique combination of color coated bands for future identification. She was then placed on a tree and observed. Her first few flight attempts were very unsteady but as more attempts were made, she seemed to be regaining the talents that she would need to survive in the wild. Eventually, the nearby male RCW showed up and landed on the same tree. The birds began vocalizing back and forth as if a pair bond was forming.



Female RCW banded by Nicole Chadwick (Department of Defense). Photo by Elizabeth Lesley.

Although the future of this RCW is uncertain, she will be intensively tracked and monitored by the natural resource staff at Ft. Jackson. The Service's dedicated partners who assisted with her rehabilitation can rest assured that this bird's progress will be closely followed. Hopefully, all the hard work that went in to saving this small woodpecker will pay off with a new brood come next nesting season.

*Submitted by Jason Ayers, Charleston, South Carolina, Ecological Services Field Office*



Fisheries Research Laboratory.  
Photo by Cara Hoar, Louisiana  
Department of Wildlife and  
Fisheries.

### Louisiana celebrates new Fisheries Research Laboratory

On June 30, 2009, staff members from the Service's Division of Federal Assistance joined the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries along with Louisiana legislators, local officials and community members to celebrate the long-awaited opening of the agency's new Fisheries Research Laboratory. This \$23 million research laboratory is located on seven acres in Grand Isle, Louisiana, and provides staff biologists with a state-of-the-art facility to better manage and monitor Louisiana's fisheries resources.

The 35,000 square-foot complex contains a laboratory equipped with wet and dry research areas, a shellfish and finfish hatchery, a research library, a conference room and an education center with sleeping quarters to accommodate research staff and overnight students.

The facility was designed to withstand the harsh weather conditions as the agency's previous research lab was hit by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, then by hurricanes Gustav and Ike in 2008. The floors of all buildings within the new complex are 18 feet above sea level, and the structures are constructed to survive winds in excess of 150 miles per hour.

The new lab will serve as "headquarters" for Louisiana's Sport Fish Restoration and Artificial Reef Programs, which are both Federal Assistance grant programs. In fiscal year 2009, Louisiana received more than \$7 million in Sport Fish Restoration funds to conduct projects such as fisheries research, habitat enhancement, aquatic education, and fishing and boating access.

Research also will be conducted at the lab on commercially important species such as crab, shrimp, and oysters and their associated habitat, which are all vital to the economy of Louisiana.

In addition to research on important recreational and commercial species, the lab also will provide a base of operation for the rehabilitation of stranded and out-of-habitat marine species such as manatees, dolphins and sea turtles.

There was much to celebrate during the ribbon-cutting ceremony, which symbolized all of the hard work and dedication that went into opening the lab.

"This project is one of my proudest accomplishments in my tenure at Wildlife and Fisheries," said LDWF Secretary Robert Barham. "This is one of the finest research facilities in the United States and will help Louisiana maintain its dominance and prestige as one of the greatest seafood producers in the world. I welcome all Louisianians to visit the Fisheries Research Lab in the months and years to come, as we continue to fulfill our mission of monitoring, managing and protecting the living aquatic resources for all."



Cara Hoar, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF), Shari Brewer, FWS/Division of Federal Assistance, Bob Gasaway, FWS/Division of Federal Assistance, Joey Shepard, LDWF, Craig Cavalli, FWS/Division of Federal Assistance, Marilyn Lawal, FWS/Division of Federal Assistance, Myron Fisher, LDWF. Photo courtesy of Cara Hoar.

*Submitted by Shari Brewer, Federal Assistance, Atlanta, Georgia*



Participants at the Anniston meeting. Photo by Diane Beeman.

### Federal Case Team hosts meeting about Anniston PCB site

Staff of the Alabama Ecological Services Field Office recently hosted a meeting of the Federal Case Team for the Anniston PCB Site. Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), a group of synthetic chemicals, have been classed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as priority Persistent, Bioaccumulative, and Toxic (PBT) pollutants and have been associated with a wide variety of adverse effects to fish, wildlife, and habitat quality. PCBs released from a chemical manufacturing facility in Anniston over a more than 40 years are widespread in Anniston and more than 100 miles of Choccolocco Creek and the Coosa River.

The meeting, held at Cheaha State Park on May 27, and 28, 2009, promoted a higher level of coordination and cooperation among federal agencies engaged in Superfund cleanup efforts and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) activities at the Anniston PCB Site. The NRDA process allows state and federal natural resource trustees to obtain compensation for injuries to natural resources from the parties responsible for the release of hazardous substances. Monies received for injuries are then used to restore natural resources impacted by the pollution.

Attendees included representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of Justice, MacDonal Environmental Sciences LTD, the Regional Solicitor's Office, and the Service. Interagency coordination efforts at the Anniston PCB Site were cited by EPA and the Department of Interior officials as a model of effective Superfund-NRDA coordination. The meeting also provided an opportunity to introduce Karen Marlowe, the new Anniston NRDA Case Manager, to the Federal Case Team.

*Submitted by Diane Beeman, Ecological Services, Atlanta, Georgia*



Jeremy Hauk holds a specimen of the shiny-rayed pocketbook. Photo by Jaclyn Zelko.

### Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery welcomes two graduate students from Columbus State University

Two graduate students from Columbus State University recently joined the hatchery team to work on freshwater mussel research. Andy Hartzog and Jeremy Hauk are working on the development of propagation techniques and protocols, as well as gathering information on life history, habitat assessment and population status of the threatened purple bankclimber. Columbus State and Warm Springs Hatchery have worked closely in the past with freshwater mussel conservation efforts in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River basin.

*Submitted by Jaclyn Zelko, Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, Warm Springs, Georgia*



Andy Hartzog holds a specimen of the purple bankclimber. Photo by Jaclyn Zelko.

## Friends Group --



Friends and partners at the Black Bayou Lake pier extension ribbon cutting. Photo by Gay Brantley.

[Album.](#)

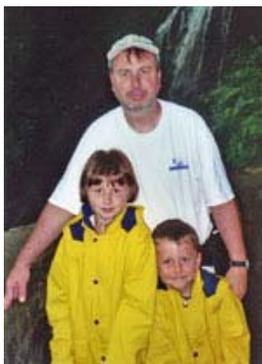
### Friends of Black Bayou, Inc. partner with community

The Friends Black Bayou partnered with the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Department, the City of Monroe, the Monroe/West Monroe Visitor and Convention Bureau, a local engineering firm, and a local deck building business to add 850 feet to the wildlife pier at Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Memorial funds for the son of long-time Friends member and refuge advocate George Mouk were used to put covers on the two deck platforms. Thanks to George Mouk, Friends President Wallace Hardy, and other members of this wonderful support group, the refuge has a 1,250 wildlife pier that creates another loop on our nature trail. This addition continues to be "wildly" popular with fishermen, birders, and other refuge visitors. More photos in [Photo](#)



Cover over the deck area of the pier extension. Photo by Gay Brantley.

*Submitted by Gay Brantley, Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Monroe, Louisiana*



Mark MacAllister with his daughter Manon and his son Cade. Photo by Catherine MacAllister.

### Red Wolf Coalition board member maintains Landmark Website

The Service's Red Wolf Recovery Program has been fortunate to work with the Red Wolf Coalition (RWC), for over 10 years. The RWC is the world's only red wolf conservation non-governmental organization, and it supports federal efforts in red wolf education, public outreach and Congressional communications. The Board of Directors includes members with skills in Internet technology, captive wolf care, International Wolf Center liaisons, editing and writing expertise, marketing, and local community awareness

One of those members, Mark MacAllister, Coordinator, On-Line Learning Projects, North Carolina Zoological Society maintains a web site called Field Trip Earth. This site was recently named a Landmark Website - - one of the 21 best websites for learning and curriculum development - - by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), a division of the American Library Association (ALA). Other Landmark Websites so honored include Library of Congress, NASA, PBS Teachers, Smithsonian Education, Apple Learning Interchange, and Google Earth--as well as some other long-term projects such as WebQuest and EduTopia. "Not a bad crowd to find ourselves in," Mark said.

See Field Trip Earth at <http://www.fieldtripearth.org/>

*Submitted by Diane Hendry, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo, North Carolina*

### Amazing advocate and true friend will be missed

In the summer of 2006, Dennis McCarty learned that the Norfolk Fish Hatchery was in need of public support.

He called my office and asked, "how can I be a part of making this Friends Group come together?" From that day he was the driving force of the first list of supporters for the newly forming organization. Dennis set up an Information Chart and worked through Trout Unlimited to gather contacts for what soon became the charter members of the group, evolving into the very first Board of Directors, with Dennis as Treasurer.

He was a consummate spokesman and guardian of the rivers in Arkansas, and will be so terribly missed by all those who knew him and shared his passion for fisheries conservation. Dennis was visiting his beloved fishing cabin when he fell ill and passed on July 5, 2009. He leaves behind a beautiful family and loving friends, including his Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery.



Dennis McCarty receives the Coy Kaylor Award for lifetime conservation work from Trout Unlimited in March 2009. Photo courtesy of Teresa VanWinkle.

*Submitted by Teresa VanWinkle, Honorary Member, Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery, Mountain Home, Arkansas*

## Hats Off -



Senator Mitch McConnell presents check to Refuge Manager Michael Johnson to support the refuge's land acquisition program. Photo by Ray Stainfield.

### Senator Mitch McConnell visits Clarks River Refuge

On Thursday May 28, 2009, Kentucky's Senior Senator, Mitch McConnell, visited Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge and presented a check for \$750,000 to Refuge Manager Michael Johnson. The money will be used to support the refuge's land acquisition program. Senator McConnell has been supportive of the refuge since its establishment in 1997 and has secured over \$14 million to aid the refuge with land purchases and development of facilities. During the presentation of the check, Senator McConnell mentioned the refuge is one of his favorite projects in Kentucky, and he promised to continue his support. During his visit, the Senator took time to pause for pictures and talk with area school kids and 4-H members who have experienced environmental

educational programs at the refuge. Staff members and volunteers also had the opportunity to speak with the Senator to express their gratitude for his support.



Senator Mitch McConnell with local elementary students attending Refuge land acquisition check presentation event. Photo by Andy Eller.

*Submitted by Stacey Campbell, Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge, Benton, Kentucky*

## ***I Gave '8' --***



Lauren Lamb displays an insect that she caught in her sweep net.  
Photo by Larry Pace.

### **Camp Wild at the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge**

Refuge Manager Alejandro Galvan and Engineering Equipment Operator Don Roby from the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge joined Megan Ellis from the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and volunteers in hosting Camp Wild at the refuge for kids aged 8 to 12. Thirteen kids attended the day camp lasting from June 8 to June 11, 2009. A different animal category - - insects, birds, herptiles, and fish - - was discussed each day. Professional biologists led each day with a learning session and then demonstrated how biologists work in the field.

During the first day, the kids learned from Dr. Nathan Schiff an entomologist from the U.S. Forest Service and Dr. Ellen Green an entomologist from Delta State University. They displayed insects that were collected from all over the world. After teaching the kids the proper use of sweep nets, they led the group on a nature walk where they collected and identified bugs.

On Tuesday, the kids were led by Dr. Mark Bonta from Delta State University who taught them about birds and how to watch and identify them. The kids had a contest to see who could make the best bird nest and then marched out into the field armed with binoculars to participate in a birding scavenger hunt. On Wednesday Wildlife Biologist Becky Rosamond from the North Mississippi Refuges Complex led a session on herptiles. The group used dip nets to collect leopard frog metamorphs to be used in a malformed frog survey and also checked minnow traps to identify other amphibian species.

On the final day, Gary Lucas, a fisheries biologist from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, taught them about fish and dissected specimens showing them stomach contents and how to age fish. Next, they all went to Happy Hollow Lake and watched as a biologist pulled a seine and checked gill nets.

Besides those who took time out to help instruct and lead the kids, the Cleveland, Mississippi Women's Club and Garden Club donated snacks and drinks and provided volunteers to help make the camp successful. Through this collaborative effort, these children had a great time and gained hands-on experience exploring and learning about the natural world. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

*Submitted by Alejandro Galvan, Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge, Boyle, Mississippi*

### **Kids enjoy crabbing trip**

On July 10, 2009, Amy Midgett, Bobby Govan, and Jon Powers, all employees at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, took seven children crabbing. They talked about the differences between male and female crabs, and showed the kids peelers, snapping turtles, and yellow-bellied sliders. The group also caught white perch and saw numerous deer and bears.



Going crabbing. Photo by Amy Midgett.

*Submitted by Amy Midgett, Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, Manteo, North Carolina*



Boy Scout troop 53, Jose (Funfi) Fernandez, Bruce Butler, and Oscar Diaz. FWS Photo.

### I Gave Eight by leading a Boy Scout hike at Vieques National Wildlife Refuge

Last month, Boy Scout Troop 53 from Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, visited Vieques. The troop's visit to the island included a visit to the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge Officer Bruce Butler an Eagle Scout and a former Boy Scout, along with Puerto Rico Police Department Agent Jose (Funfi) Fernandez, and Assistant Scout Master Oscar Diaz, a Service employee and the former manager of Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, led the troop on a short hike on the refuge. Butler and Fernandez talked to the troop about law enforcement efforts on the refuge. The hike included an area with many active leatherback sea turtle nests. The officers shared stories about how some people may steal the eggs from the nest which is a violation of the Endangered Species Act. Butler also shared some of his experiences from Boy Scouts and urged the scouts to stay with scouting and always do their best in their endeavors.

*Submitted by Bruce Butler, Vieques National Wildlife Refuge, Puerto Rico*

## Photo Album --

### Camp Wild at the Dahomey National Wildlife Refuge -- more photos



Collecting leopard frog metamorphs is a dirty job. Photo by Larry Pace.



Dr. Ellen Green hands out a live beetle for willing campers to hold. Photo by Larry Pace.

### Trout-tastic fishing fun at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery -- more photos



She won the biggest fish contest in the five and six year-old category. FWS Photo.



Katrina Holt and Lauren Allen (Goldie Goldfish) greet a young derby participant. FWS Photo.

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**Friends of Black Bayou, Inc. partner with community -- more photos**



Pier Extension allows for boats to enter the loop. Photo by Gay Brantley.



Junction of the pier extension and the nature trail at Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Gay Brantley.

## ***Visitor Services --***

### **EarthCaching: A great way to promote visitation to National Wildlife Refuges**



Students visit J.N. "Ding" Darling  
Refuge to explore EarthCaches.  
FWS Photo.

EarthCaching is an exciting educational offshoot of the already popular sport of geocaching. The goal of EarthCaching is to take people to sites of geological interest, not only in the United States, but around the world, and to use those sites to teach them some fascinating aspect of our planet. EarthCaches include a set of educational notes provided on the web, along with the location information or the latitude and longitude needed to find a place.

EarthCaching can be a great way to get people outdoors and exploring our wonderful natural areas and learning about their significant importance to our planet. The program has been operating for less than two years and already there are more than 200 EarthCaches in over 17 countries.

Some refuges have already realized how much fun EarthCaching can be since it is an activity that the whole family can enjoy. J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge set up an EarthCache on the refuge earlier this year, and it is getting a lot of use from the local community and out of town visitors.

To develop your own EarthCache site on a refuge and share its educational value with others, go to <http://www.earthcache.org/> and follow the set-up guidelines. Once your site is approved by the Geological Society of America, it is released to the wider community through <http://www.geocaching.com>.

*Submitted by Sharon Fuller, Visitor Services, Atlanta, Georgia*

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## Wage Grade Profile --

### Paul Caudill of Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge



Paul Caudill, FWS Photo.

Equipment Operator Paul Caudill started working at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge as a temporary employee right after his graduation from Starkville High School. Paul remained in that temporary position while he attended Mississippi State University. Two years later, Paul was offered a full-time position at the refuge, and he took it. Now, 34 years later, he's still at work on the refuge and is currently the longest-tenured employee at Noxubee.

Although Paul says he occasionally has questioned his choice of starting work rather than finishing school and trying another profession, he really doesn't regret his decision. "After all, he said, "If I want to, I'm still young enough to do something else after I retire from the refuge."

Although his title is Equipment Operator, Paul does a number of things, including being responsible for SAMMS. (That's an it, not a who.) The Service Asset Maintenance Management System is the computer program that Paul uses to keep track of field work. He also maintains large and small equipment.

For many years, Paul used his vacation days to drive a tour bus. He still loves to travel. Many Starkville youths remember him as the pleasant driver of the bus at First United Methodist Church where he remains active. However, with the arrival of his grandchildren, Paul curtailed his driving to have time to enjoy them. Paul and his wife, Genny, have two children and five grandchildren.

Paul's vast institutional memory and knowledge of the equipment and facilities make him a very valuable person to Noxubee. He is a long-time employee "doing what needs to be done." Paul, we appreciate you!

*Submitted by Andrea Dunstan, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi*

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