



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

*Southeast Region***Southeastern Currents**

MAY 2010 NEWSLETTER

<input type="checkbox"/> Home Page	<input type="checkbox"/> Behind Scenes	<input type="checkbox"/> Bragging Rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Friends Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Hats Off	<input type="checkbox"/> Gave '8'	<input type="checkbox"/> Photo Album	<input type="checkbox"/> Wage Grade	<input type="checkbox"/> Visitor Services
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Sam Hamilton, then Southeast Regional Director, presents Gail Carmody with the Field Supervisor of the Year Award in 2007. Photo by Paul Lang, FWS.

Gail Carmody's conservation legacy

If you look inside Gail Carmody's office, you'd never know she was someone who was just days away from turning over her keys, and retiring from one of the most diverse field offices in Region 4. Carmody has been head of the Panama City Ecological Services Field Office for nearly twenty years, and there is still plenty of work that needs to be done.....work that will continue long after she leaves.

Carmody's calling for conservation work came at a young age. She remembers helping Girl Scout and Boy Scout Troops earn conservation badges. Maybe it was those simple teachings in the woods that helped her grasp the concept of protecting our natural resources. She's held onto those ideals as she's guided dozens of biologists over the years. "I think it's just my need to see the big picture, and somehow, get it all linked together," explained Carmody.

At the Panama City Field Office, seeing the big picture means running the office strategically. With such a diverse mix of resources, Carmody has divided her biologists into Eco-Teams, and each Team has specific goals. Carmody likes to use a rock metaphor to describe her office's top priorities: when you fill up your buckets, put the big rocks in first. Don't get bogged down with too many pebbles. "You have to keep your eye on the conservation goal," says Carmody. "If you're not careful, you get caught up in all sorts of things that a year from now won't matter. It's human nature. "

Carmody says Landscape Conservation Cooperatives fall right in line with what her office has been doing for years. She says implementing LCC's depends on one key element: "To me, LCC is improving communication in a way that folks in the field can get important information quicker than they did in the past," said Carmody. "You also have to knit together all of the Global Information Systems data in a way that can improve local communication in the context of the bigger conservation goal that we have."

Carmody may have a knack for keeping her eye on the big conservation prize, but her staff members are the ones who make things happen on the ground. The men and women of the Panama City Field Office have overcome many obstacles to be successful. "The challenge has been to get a grasp of multiple disciplines in order to do our jobs," explained Carmody. "Some days we have to know about engineering. Some days we have to know about physics. Other days we have to know about economics, sociology and law, in addition to keeping up with the huge conservation leaps we've made in the last decade."

With such challenges, how does the Panama City Field Office make it work? "I think we recognize that every person has their own unique gift. They bring those gifts together to build a team."

Carmody's leadership style has been influenced by a few special folks along the way. It was the late Director Sam Hamilton who

helped her understand how important it is to look at long-term goals instead of expecting immediate results. Hamilton honored her with the prestigious Field Supervisor of the Year Award in 2007. "He would say regularly, 'this is not a race. It's a marathon, and as long as we keep working at it, we'll head toward that finish line. We just have to grab the flag and keep running.'"

For now, Carmody is passing her flag on to Acting Project Leader Don Imm, who plans to continue Carmody's legacy. "Gail's greatest asset for the office is her ability to ensure the staff has the resources they need to get the job done," said Imm. "She is able to grasp how the Panama City Field Office fits into the conservation picture, and she knows how to utilize partnerships to keep the ball moving forward no matter what."

But don't think that taking Carmody's title away means she'll go quietly into the night. Although she plans to spend retirement travelling and focusing on family, conservation is still in her blood. After all, she's been with the Service for more than thirty years. So, she'll continue the legacy she has already started in northwest Florida. "But no paperwork," laughs Carmody. "I want to help make something happen.....and maybe play a little golf."

For Carmody, retirement also doesn't mean a sad goodbye. For her, this is just a transition into a new chapter. In the meantime, she wants to continue her relationship with the folks she's met through her work. "We have strong camaraderie, where people are not only co-workers, but they're also good friends. I've been lucky to be involved with an office like that. We've accomplished wonderful goals, and had really fun times along the way."

Submitted by Denise Rowell, Alabama and Panama City, Florida, Ecological Services Field Offices

Behind the Scenes--



Hatchery workers carry fish in old milk cans. Historical Forest Service/FWS Photo

Fifth generation at Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery

Rebekah Pickelsimer recently visited the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery in Suches, Georgia. She is the granddaughter of Facilities Operations Specialist Mitchell Pickelsimer. Mitch has worked at the hatchery for almost 20 years and administers the fish production and stocking program. Mitch is very dedicated to his job and loves doing it. Mitch literally grew up on the hatchery since his father, Sylvan Pickelsimer, worked for 38 years at the hatchery as a Maintenance Worker. Mitch loved coming to work with his dad as a youngster, and that is one of the reasons he wanted to work at the fish hatchery.



Mitchell Pickelsimer with his granddaughter Rebekah. Photo by Crystal Thomas, FWS.

In the early 1940's, Hubert Pickelsimer, father of Sylvan and grandfather of Mitch, worked for the U.S. Forest Service. Chattahoochee Forest hatchery was then owned and operated by the Forest Service. Mr. Pickelsimer helped with raising and distributing fish during this time. The fish were hand-carried in old milk cans and stocked throughout North Georgia.



Rebekah picks up a loose fish. Photo by Crystal Thomas, FWS.

As you can see, this truly is a family affair that has lasted throughout five generations. Bekah already has shown true ability in picking up "loose" fish. The hatchery crew has a hard time catching that one fish that escapes out of the net, but not Bekah. She just scoops it right up and loves every minute. She may very well grow up and work on a National Fish Hatchery somewhere!

Submitted by Crystal Thomas, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery, Suches, Georgia

Bragging Rights --



Darlene Dean discusses job requirements with an interested student. Photo by Shari Brewer, FWS.

Service participates in University of Georgia career fair

Darlene Dean of Human Capital Management, Jennifer Strickland of External Affairs, and Shari Brewer of Diversity and Civil Rights represented the Service at the University of Georgia's (UGA) Government and Non-profit Career Fair on March 24. A total of 536 UGA students participated in the career fair, and the Service's booth stayed quite busy during the event.

Jennifer Strickland, a recent UGA graduate and the Southeast Region's New Media Specialist, was excited to return to her alma mater and share her experiences of working for the Fish and Wildlife Service with the UGA students. Students were interested in the conservation work we do and eager to learn about employment opportunities with our agency.

The key messages that Jennifer, Darlene, and Shari shared with students were that the Service is a great place to work with a honorable and awesome mission, and that the Service not only recruits biologists but it recruits many other career fields that help carry out its conservation objectives. If you are planning to attend an upcoming recruitment event, contact the Diversity and Civil Rights Office for outreach materials.



Darlene Dean and Jennifer Strickland share information about the Fish and Wildlife Service with another student. Photo by Shari Brewer, FWS.

Submitted by Shari Brewer, Diversity and Civil Rights, Atlanta, Georgia



As the group waited to take their place in the parade, they decorated the refuge truck with FWS banners. Photo by Kent Ozment, FWS.

Puddles appears with the Friends of Clarks River in the annual Tater Day parade

Tater Day is a locally recognized holiday in Benton, Kentucky that began in 1842 with the selling of sweet potatoes. Now the tradition has grown to include a flea market, carnival rides, arts and crafts, a barbeque, a cook-off, and most importantly the parade. This year, the Friends of Clarks River decided to make an appearance in this historical parade to increase awareness about the refuge, and to promote the Friends Group.

Several Friends members and refuge staff members, along with Puddles, walked the two and a half- mile parade beside a decorated refuge truck to distribute Fish and Wildlife Service brochures, blue goose pencils, tattoos, and posters to the thousands of people who lined the city streets on the morning of April 5th. The event was deemed a success, and plans are being made to participate in 2011.



Puddles was a popular character in the parade. Photo by Kent Ozment, FWS.

Submitted by Stacey Hayden, Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge, Benton, Kentucky



Visitors walk through the Visitor Environmental Education Center as lights are flipped off at the start of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery's participation in Earth Hour 2010. Photo courtesy of Robert Abright, FWS Volunteer

Lights out at Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery for Earth Hour 2010

On Saturday, March 27, 2010, some visitors to Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery found themselves in the dark, all to raise awareness of the importance of energy conservation and the potential impacts of climate change to our fish and wildlife species. As part of the global Earth Hour 2010 campaign, Wolf Creek turned off all non-essential lights for one hour. Signs were posted, and staff members distributed fact sheets and talked with visitors about the significance of the event.

Business, families, and schools also were encouraged to join Wolf Creek in Earth Hour 2010, as other agencies and organizations, including the Russell County Soil Conservation District and the Russell County Middle School participated.

Earth Hour started in 2007 in Sydney, Australia, when 2.2 million homes and businesses turned their lights off for one hour to make their stand against climate change. Only a year later, Earth Hour became a global sustainability movement with more than 50 million people across 35 countries participating. Global landmarks such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, The CN Tower in Toronto, The Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, and Rome's Coliseum, all stood in darkness, as symbols of hope for a cause that grows more urgent by the hour. In March 2009, hundreds of millions of people took part in the third Earth Hour. More than 4,000 cities in 88 countries officially switched their lights off to pledge their support for the planet, making Earth Hour 2009 the world's largest global climate change initiative. World Wildlife Fund sponsors the campaign.

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

Aging fat threeridge mussels

In January, Nicole Rankin and Greg Moyer, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, completed the sectioning and aging of 168 fat threeridge mussel samples. The mussels were collected dead from the Apalachicola River during the drought of 2006 and 2007. The oldest individual was aged to 24 years, and 83 percent of the individuals sampled were under age 10. This age information was provided to Karen Herrington of the Panama City Fisheries Resources Office to be used in a population viability analysis. Population viability analysis can be an extremely useful tool for investigating current and future risks of fat threeridge mussel population decline or extinction. Nicole and Greg will continue to collaborate with Karen and plan to begin an age validation study of fat threeridge this summer. A medium- to large-sized mussel, the fat threeridge was listed as endangered in 1998. It is only found in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River System in southeast Georgia and north Florida.



Sectioning a purple banksimber using a low-speed saw. FWS Photo

Submitted by: Nicole M. Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia



Participants from Junior Ranger Camp 2009 learn how to build a fish. FWS Photo.

June Junior Ranger Camps focus on birds

Rosla Plant and Nicole Rankin, Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center, met with staff from the Roosevelt's Little White House Historic Site on February 17, 2010, to coordinate this year's Junior Ranger Camp program. Three facilities, F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Roosevelt's Little White House, and the Warm Springs Regional Fisheries Center are participating in the Junior Ranger Camps, and participants will spend one day at each facility: This year, all three sites will offer birding activities, such as building a bird feeder or a bird house or going on bird hikes, to emphasize the value of bird and habitat conservation. The Regional Fisheries Center also will offer the Biologist in Training (BiT) program. Junior Rangers will learn about aquatic food webs and habitats, fish identification and body parts, and aquatic species conservation. Junior Ranger Camps will be held on June 15 to 17, and June 22 to 24, 2010.

Submitted by Nicole M. Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery hosts 2010 Kentucky Junior Duck Stamp judging

After months of planning and communication among fellow team members at Clark's River National Wildlife Refuge and the Kentucky Ecological Services Office, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery hosted the judging for the 2010 Kentucky Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Staff members from each of the three offices spent much time preparing lists of contacts and information packets, and communicating with the art teachers of each school. All entries were mailed to Clarks River and sorted by the ages of the participants. A total of 1,113 entries were submitted by the March 15, 2010, contest entry deadline.

Judging for the 2010 event went well thanks to the attention, detail, and focused effort of the following judges: Orville Crigler, Publishers Press; David Holmes, Ducks Unlimited; Taylor Orr, District Commissioner, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR); Rick Hill, Artist/Illustrator, KDFWR; and Ryan Noel, Resident Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Along with many accolades of appreciation, each judge enjoyed a catered lunch, along with a token of gratitude for their time and energy. The Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc., helped provide the lunch.



Judges for the 2010 Kentucky Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest pose with the Best of Show winning artwork. Photo by Amanda Patrick, FWS.

Several media outlets from around Kentucky covered the event, including John Thompson, The Russell Register, Jamestown, Kentucky; Lee McClellan, KDFWR, Kentucky Afield; and Gary Garth, The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Kentucky.

Kentucky's Best of Show was a colored-pencil drawing of a ruddy duck by Katy Langsdale, age 16, of Union, Kentucky.

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



The judging begins with 1,113 pieces of artwork to be considered during the 2010 Kentucky Junior Duck Stamp (JDS) Art Contest. Photo by Amanda Patrick, FWS.

Christmas cheer continues to benefit Bayou Sauvage marshes

More than 8,000 discarded Christmas trees, collected curbside in New Orleans, were dropped into place on March 30, to create new marsh habitat at Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. The trees form a breakwater which traps sediments and slows wave action, allowing more sunlight to reach submerged grasses and regenerate healthy marsh in areas hit hard by Katrina.



A camera man gets a good shot of trees being placed into marshes.
Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS

In cooperation with the City of New Orleans, the Christmas trees were picked up and stored at a site near the refuge, where volunteers removed tinsel, bundled the trees, and secured them for hoisting by helicopter. The Louisiana Air National Guard, many recently returned from tours in Iraq, used the mission as a training exercise. Four Blackhawk copters arrived at the refuge early that morning, and soon bundles of trees began soaring over the highway to the drop site. Once the trees were dropped into place, Fish and Wildlife Service airboat crews removed the slings and returned them to shore to be trucked back and used again. With four Blackhawks in the air, the trees were arriving at a quick pace. The airshow attracted curious onlookers and was extensively covered by local TV stations. By lunchtime all the trees were in place, and all concerned enjoyed oyster po-boys and other goodies provided by the Mayor's Office of Environmental Affairs. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Byron Fortier, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex, Lacombe, Louisiana



Chester Figiel (WSFTC) and Frida Powers (Friends) chat with the Earth Day Fair mascot.
FWS Photo.

Fort Benning Earth Day Festival

Biologists from the Warm Springs Fish Technology Center (WSFTC), the Fort Benning Ecological Services Office (FBESO), and the Friends of the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery (Friends) participated in the 2010 Earth Day Fair at Faith Middle School on Fort Benning, GA on April 15, 2010. This event focused on promoting environmental stewardship and awareness of public resources to students from the six schools on Fort Benning. Chester Figiel (WSFTC), Nicole Rankin (WSFTC), Sandy Spivey (FBESO), Sandy Abbott (FBESO), and Frida Powers (Friends) provided information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, aquatic species biology and conservation, and red-cockaded woodpecker recovery.



Juvenile American alligator.
FWS Photo.

More than 500 children and teachers received educational materials, looked at juvenile lake sturgeon in an aquarium, and touched crayfish, salamanders, and an American alligator.

Submitted by: Nicole Rankin, Warm Springs Fish Technology Center, Georgia



Terry Callihan and Kelly Taylor of Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery. Photo by Crystal Thomas, FWIS

Fish hatchery employees aid in rescue attempt

Terry Callihan, facilities operations specialist, and Kelly Taylor, assistant hatchery manager, at the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery in Georgia also are firefighters. They provide assistance to the U.S. Forest Service under a Memorandum Of Understanding covering fire responses and rescue attempts. Callihan and Taylor also assist with Forest Service and National Wildlife Refuge fires and prescribed burns. They have served on several fire details throughout the United States.

On April 12, 2010, a Navy plane crashed in an area approximately 20 miles from the hatchery. Local residents reported a crash to 911 after seeing the plane going down and then seeing smoke. Callihan and Taylor were immediately called to help in the search, as well as to put out the fire which was spreading on Forest Service lands. Both employees worked throughout the night to extinguish flames, but there were no survivors on board the plane. All four passengers were killed on impact. A Department of Defense investigation is ongoing. Navy planes based in Florida routinely conduct cross-country missions throughout the North Georgia area. Due to the mountainous terrain in this area, plane crashes are not uncommon. There have been numerous crashes over the past several years, most resulting in no survivors. Callihan and Taylor admit that the search and rescue missions are hard both physically and emotionally, but they are glad to be of assistance. "It's somebody's family out there," as Callihan so aptly states.

Submitted by Crystal Thomas, Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery, Suches, Georgia

Florida Panther Refuge celebrates Save the Panther Day

Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge hosted an Open House on March 20, to recognize Save the Panther Day. Florida Governor Charlie Crist made a state proclamation to highlight panther recovery needs. About 200 outdoor participants enjoyed the event which featured many hands-on activities including guided trail walks, plant identification walks, birding and orchid tours, and swamp buggy tours. Participants also listened to informative talks on panther captures and prescribed burning at the refuge.

"We offered talks and activities that explained the refuge's role to conserve panthers in Big Cypress landscape," remarked Ben Nottingham, refuge manager.

Besides the talks and tours, the public was able to gain information from 11 partner exhibitors featuring local conservation organizations, agencies, cooperating groups, and conservation areas. The Friends of Florida Panther Refuge supported the event with a free lunch and with trail guides at the refuge trail.



Mark Lotz, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, demonstrates a cushion bag used to cushion a sedated Florida panther as it falls from a tree. Photo courtesy of Art Renger, FWIS volunteer.

Submitted by Ben Nottingham, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Naples, Florida



IMBA volunteers. Photo by Craig Sasser, FWS.

New bike trail at Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge

March 27th was a beautiful, early spring day to kick off a new beginning for Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge. On this extra special day, the refuge offered a location for the International Mountain Bike Association's (IMBA), Trail Care Crew program bike trail building school and workshop. Sponsored by Subaru America and IMBA, the Trail Care program offers a hands-on workshop designed to teach bikers and volunteers how to build sustainable bike trails on public lands.

The initial concept for a bike trail originated with Dr. Genevieve Marchand, outdoor education professor at Coastal Carolina University (CCU), and Craig Sasser, refuge manager of Waccamaw. The initial idea was to connect the refuge with the CCU campus in hopes of increasing the number of students visiting the newly opened recreation area. Dr. Marchand applied for an IMBA Trail Care Crew grant, and her proposal was selected. The project started small; but, has grown considerably from its original focus because partners like the City of Conway and the American Rivers Foundation have joined in to connect future trails in the area.

During the initial trail building school, volunteers were trained on designing and building techniques with a primary focus on maintaining the environmental quality of the refuge habitats identified for the new trail system.

IMBA Trail Crew Instructor, Chris Kehmeier stated "It's not often that we get to build trails in places like Waccamaw. As with all public lands, there is a delicate balance between the preservation of diverse ecosystems and the need for providing healthy recreation options in the region."

During the workshop and trail building school over 30 volunteers participated in building a quarter-mile of single track bike trail on the Cox Ferry Lake Recreation Area which already offers nature trails and boardwalks currently open to pedestrians and bikers. From students to local bike enthusiasts, the collaboration of refuge employees, volunteers, and IMBA coordinators created a very positive energy level. This new trail is one of very few bike trails located in Upper Coastal South Carolina, and plans are underway for additional volunteer days to build more of this trail system. In addition to trail construction, the Trail Care Crew has signed an agreement to patrol and help maintain this new bike trail.

Submitted by Craig Sasser, Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge, Georgetown, South Carolina

Earth Day at Lower Suwannee

Chiefland Elementary School kindergartners celebrated Earth Day with a pine tree planting. Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge Forester Daniel Barrand partnered with Florida Division of Forestry - Andrews State Nursery, which donated 160 pine seedlings for the youngsters.

On Earth Day, Barrand took co-workers Terry Kelly, Jason Coates, Jaclyn Solodovnick, and Pam along with him to help 150 budding-ecologists learn the benefits of trees for wildlife and people. Terry provided encouragement and Earth Day stickers to decorate the plastic pots. Jason hoisted bags of potting soil to fill the pots for planting. Jaclyn helped the little ones to center the trees in the pots. Pam went around cheering "dirt is our friend", but none of the neat and tidy children seemed to believe her. Daniel ended the lesson by having the kids help him plant trees on the school's fenceline with a dibble, a tool of his trade.



Terry Kelly, Jason Coates, and Daniel Barrand are glad to be outside. Photo by Pam Darty, FWS.

The celebration was orchestrated by Administrative Assistant Terry Kelly, who'll be a Ranger in her next life. She coordinated with Forester Barrand, and purchased great decorations promoting Earth Day's conservation message. THREE CHEERS for the staff for getting kids outside, making a difference in our community and for our Earth.

Submitted by Pam Darty, Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, Chiefland, Florida



Solar Car Sprint contestants await the outcome of a heat race while friends and family cheer them on. Photo courtesy of Jean /Arnold, FWS volunteer.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge celebrates Earth Day with a sunny twist

Since its inception in 1970, the excitement behind Earth Day has steadily grown, so much so it seems that anywhere you go someone is hosting an event to highlight environmental issues.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has been offering its own version of fun, family-friendly Earth Day opportunities to the public for the last decade. For years visitors have joined refuge staff and volunteers to celebrate the environment and spend some time enjoying the "Jewel of the Southeast," the Okefenokee Swamp.

At Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, we have always worked hard to inspire environmental awareness in each of our visitors throughout the year, Refuge Ranger Jamie Lanier explains. "Our annual Earth Day Celebration provides the public with opportunities to come out and spend the day learning about the environment while participating in earth-friendly activities with their friends and family."

The event has always been a great success. On average, approximately 500 visitors come out each year to partake in the festivities offered during Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge's Earth Day event. This year, however, Refuge volunteers and employees wanted to raise the bar. Long time Refuge volunteer Sally Webb knew just how to take the event to the next level.

Inspired by an article she read in a magazine about high school students competing miniature race cars powered entirely by solar energy, Sally went about finding out how the refuge could get more involved in this new technology. Her efforts paid off in December 2009, as the Refuge signed on to partner with Waste Management Chesser Island Road Landfill and the Charlton County Public School System to implement the first ever Solar Car Sprint as a part of the Earth Day Celebration at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

Twenty-five Charlton County high school students paired off with refuge volunteers to construct solar car kits that would race in a total of four heats and compete in six categories: Speed, Earth Day Theme, Craftsmanship, Most Improved, Design and Technical Skill.

"We really feel that this opportunity provided a valuable educational experience for kids in our surrounding communities. Our hope is that it will encourage and inspire those participants to think more seriously about energy use and the role solar energy will play in their lifetimes," says Lanier. "As one of the first initiatives in Southeastern Georgia to involve youth in green energy, the project garnered quite a bit of press and encouraged a new group of community members to visit the Refuge, some for the very first time."

Paired with exhibit booths hosted by community organizations, nature-inspired crafts and environmentally friendly activities, live animal demonstrations and even outdoor theatrical performances, the first annual Solar Car Sprint was a welcome addition to the Refuge's Earth Day Celebration and plans to incorporate the race into future events are already in the works.

The Earth Day Celebration took place at the East Entrance of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge on the Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, Folkston, Georgia, on Saturday, April 17, 2010. For additional information on this or other Refuge Events, call

(912) 496-7836 or visit www.fws.gov/okefenokee. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Jamie Lanier, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Folkston, Georgia

Friends Group --



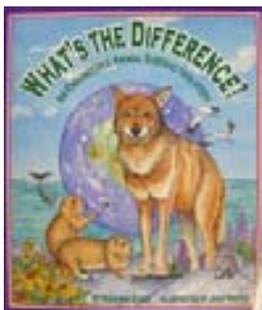
Glenda Took (left center), assistant director for the Russell County Public Library, and Filamay Cowell (right center), children's librarian, Russell County Public Library, receive books from Jerry Coleman, president, Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc. Also pictured is James Gray, Wolf Creek project leader. Photo by Amanda Patrick, FWS.

Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery donate books to public library

At a monthly meeting, held March 9, 2010, the Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery presented \$200 in children's books to the Russell County Public Library. The books all focus on outdoor themes relating to fish, fishing, or nature. The books are available for check out and will be used during the story hour for area children. The library also will place plaques inside each book with the Friend's Group information.

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

Hats Off -



What's the Difference? book cover. Photo by Terri Jacobson, FWS.

Service helps with children's book about endangered species

Just in time for Endangered Species day! A new book was published by Sylvan Dell Publishing about endangered species. In Suzanne Slade's book, *What's the Difference?* you can celebrate the huge difference caring people make for endangered animals while you practice math skills. Slade presents a new subtraction problem with a different endangered or threatened animal species written in clever rhyming verse. The colorful watercolors include realistic animals set in their habitats by illustrator, Joan Waites. Each book published by Sylvan Dell has fun, educational activities for the parent or teacher to reinforce reading comprehension and make connections to language arts, science, geography and math.

What makes this book extra special? Several people in the Service volunteered their expertise. Tom Stehn, whooping crane coordinator; Kelly Bibb, Southeast Regional recovery coordinator; Dawn Jennings, fish and wildlife biologist; and Terri Jacobson, wildlife biologist and education specialist, all contributed to the book by verifying the accuracy of the information and illustrations. You can check out

What's the Difference? and all the other educational books by Sylvan Dell Publishing at their web site: <http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/>. Tom, Kelly, Dawn and Terri are proud to help the Service celebrate endangered species with an exciting, new book!

Submitted by Terri Jacobson, Ecological Services Field Office, Jackson, Mississippi

Mississippi Sandhill Crane volunteers donate record number of hours

Spring is here and our snowbirds are migrating north!

Another great year of camper volunteers at the Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge has ended. When our last two couples were preparing to depart, we took stock of the time they had worked here and then added in hours from past refuges and parks where they had worked, and all four volunteers had over 2,000 hours!

That's one man-year per volunteer! Four years from two couples or the equivalent of \$136,000 worth of donated time; now that's dedication!



Ted Forstmeister, acting project leader, Jan and Rocky Larson, Merry and Sharon Layton, and Doug Hunt, volunteer coordinator. Photo by Emily Neidigh, FWS.

Submitted by Doug Hunt, Gulf Coast Refuge Complex, Gautier, Mississippi

I Gave '8' --



A BOW participant tends to dutch ovens while baking pineapple upside-down cake and pork loin in marmalade during a Primitive Chef class. Photo by Melody Ray-Culp, FWS.

Becoming an Outdoor Woman workshops in Florida

Don't let the funky name and potential for pink camo put you off! This is a terrific program that gets women, city and country gals alike, out on the land and into the water. Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) workshops offer a relaxed and supportive outdoor classroom for gentle immersion, allowing women to get comfortable outside and ready to connect with family and friends who love to hike, camp, hunt, fish, canoe, watch birds, and otherwise enjoy Florida's natural resources. Participants arrive for lunch on a Friday afternoon and depart after lunch on Sunday, having taken four classes from a menu of 25 that includes everything from pan, bass, and fly fishing; to archery, handguns, long-guns, and muzzleloaders; to backpacking, wilderness survival, knot tying, and orienteering; to canoeing/kayaking and motor-boating; to the most popular Primitive Chef, which really should be called Primitive Gourmet! There's also plenty to do in the evening with campfires, story-telling, star-gazing, and night hiking. Participants also can obtain Hunter Safety Certification, good for a lifetime and accepted in every state.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission offers three BOW workshops each year around the state. The cost is \$175 for the "deluxe package" (bed in a rustic, air-conditioned bunkhouse), with a discount to "tenters." The likes of Bass Pro Shops and Cabelas are generous sponsors of BOW, with each graduating class adding more shoppers to their aisles. Where else can you pick up a camo teddy along with a turkey whistle, cross-bow, and ammo? Of the 101 ladies at last year's spring workshop in Ocala National Forest, about 75 percent were first-timers, though some gals return many times to enjoy the camaraderie and practice their skills. After three workshops as a participant, "I Gave 8" and extended the fun by volunteering as an assistant instructor.



BOW participants in a Map and Compass class learn to navigate under an oak tree. Photo by Melody Ray-Culp, FWS.

Submitted by Melody Ray-Culp, Florida Panhandle Coastal Program, Panama City, FL Ecological Services Field Office

Photo Album --

Christmas cheer continues to benefit Bayou Sauvage marshes -- more photos



The Drop! Photo by Pan Dixon, FWS.



Local news crews await Christmas tree drop at Bayou Sauvage. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



Wildlife Refuge Specialist Drew Wines is interviewed by the local NBC affiliate. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



Hoist slings and a visiting cameraman are unloaded at the landing. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



Todd Smith unloads hoist slings for waiting National Guard personnel. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



Blackhawks at rest. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



All the partners pose for a group photo - a job well done! Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.



Biologist Neil Lalonde always REALLY wanted to be a helicopter pilot. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.

Community enjoys seventh annual Bayou Teche Black Bear and Birding Festival -- more photos



"Teddy Roosevelt" and other guests prepare for a boat tour of Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge. Photo courtesy of Bill Jewell, FWS volunteer.



Bear cubs cross the stream and find food along the way. Photo courtesy of Bill Jewell, FWS volunteer.



Laura Thomas shows how coastal wetlands protect us from storm surges. Photo courtesy of Bill Jewell, FWS volunteer.



"Teddy Roosevelt Bear" enjoys meeting with Bear Festival visitors. Photo courtesy of Bill Jewell, FWS volunteer.



"Teddy Roosevelt Bear" and Friends of Bayou Teche president Dolores Stewart. Photo courtesy of Bill Jewell, FWS volunteer.



A young visitor compares his "wing span" to other birds. Photo by Debbie Fuller, FWS.

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge celebrates Earth Day with a sunny twist -- more photos



Driftwood Education Center shows visitors some of the native reptiles found at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. Photo courtesy of Jean Amodei, FWS volunteer



Folks from the Brunswick Ecological Services Office talk to visitors about wildlife protection laws. Photo Credit: Jean Amodei, Refuge Volunteer



Tony DeJarram from Driftwood Education Center talks to the children about the environment before his staff puts on Dr. Seuss's "The Lorax" play. Photo courtesy of Jean Amodei, FWS volunteer.



Folks from the Brunswick Ecological Services Office talk to visitors about wildlife protection laws. Photo courtesy of Jean Amodei, FWS volunteer.

Visitor Services --



James W. Foote, Teddy Roosevelt impersonator, in front of Refuge's display. Photo by Byron Fortier, FWS.

Community enjoys seventh annual Bayou Teche Black Bear and Birding Festival

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service hosted the "Bear-y Patch" educational area at this annual event on Saturday April 17. The festival celebrates the presence of the threatened Louisiana Black Bear in Bayou Teche National Wildlife Refuge and other nearby lands surrounding Franklin, LA. The Bear-y Patch is part of the larger Bear festival, held downtown and with many new attractions and bigger crowds this year. About 800 visitors came through the educational area.

Staff members from Southeast Louisiana Refuges and from the Lafayette Ecological Services Office educated and entertained festival goers of all ages with large displays and with hands-on activities. They were joined by eleven other wildlife and conservation exhibitors, including several from area high schools taking part for the first time.

The Ecological Services office's popular "Be a Bear" obstacle course took kids through the trials and hazards faced by young bear cubs in their first year of life. Wearing furry vests, the bear "cubs" dodged "cars" on busy highways, searched for food, crossed streams on downed logs, and located den sites. Lots of other hands-on goodies were featured at Ecological Services' large display area.

Refuge staff highlighted the role of healthy coastal marshes with two models comparing storm surge impact in communities with healthy marsh buffers and those with deteriorated marshes. The "surging" blue marbles representing the sea easily passed thru the deteriorated marsh and caused lots of damage to "your town", while the healthy marsh slowed the surge to a trickle. The refuges display also featured the Louisiana winners in the Junior Duck Stamp competition, about 35 pieces of artwork.

The Bayou Teche refuge Friends group recruited visitors for refuge canoe tours, hiking, and pontoon boat tours, all of which were very popular.

There were two Teddys at Bear Fest! James Foote, a professional Teddy Roosevelt impersonator was on hand, engaging kids in conversations about wildlife and the importance of refuges, and posing for lots of photos. The Teddy "bear" costume was worn by a refuge volunteer, and the two Teddys were seen chatting about....who knows? If that wasn't startling enough, they were joined later by an Ivory-billed woodpecker, courtesy of Ecological Services office volunteers. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Byron Fortier, Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex, Lacombe, Louisiana

Wage Grade Profile --

Joshua Gegg, Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge



*Joshua Gegg with the cookie cutter.
Photo by Tara Dowdy, FWS.*

Whether operating heavy equipment to place 7,000 tons of rock to repair a refuge road or rehabbing an observation tower, Joshua Gegg, equipment operator, enjoys his job because he "does something different all the time."

He routinely assists the Service's partner, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, with the management of Reelfoot Lake. The lake is shallow and full of cypress trees and submerged tree stumps. To remove this vegetation, Joshua operates an aquatic excavator, called a cookie cutter, which improves boat navigation and water flow throughout the lake.

Joshua also is the 'go to' person to find any piece of equipment because he keeps all of the refuge's equipment, tools, and shops in order.

He has worked at Reelfoot and the other refuges comprising the West Tennessee Refuge complex for seven years, since 2003.

"Josh takes a great deal of pride in his work and sets an example of how each of us should perform our duties on the job," said Alan Whited, manager of Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge.

In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife Janell and their 18-month-old son Kody. He also restores cars and trucks at his shop and is a volunteer firefighter.

Submitted by Tara Dowdy, Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, Union City, Tennessee

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