



Chief Editor: Elsie Davis

September - October 2014



RD's Corner

One of the things I like best about being Regional Director is having the opportunity to see the

big picture of what folks across all programs in the Southeast Region are doing for fish, wildlife, plants and people. Every day I am inspired anew by employees, offices and stations that are breaking new ground in how they accomplish our conservation mission. I don't plan on keeping those stories to myself. I'm committed to making sure all employees share in the excitement and momentum that is being built as we pursue Conservation Southern Style.

What is southern-style conservation? For one thing, it is fueled by strong working relationships, internally and externally. We all know what a strong working relationship looks and feels like: Trust is high in one another and our mutual good intentions. We recognize that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, and that what unites us—a shared passion for conserving wildlife and wild lands—is greater than what divides us—our program and agency affiliations. We are transparent in our dealings, we give one another the benefit of the doubt when things go wrong, we celebrate one another's successes, and we overlook one another's shortcomings. We think more in terms of "we" than "they." We can disagree without being

Partnership equals success for nesting sea turtles at Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge

By: Katherine Taylor, External Affairs

Florida's sea turtle nesting season began in March and continues through October, and with less than a month left it has been a great year for nesting turtles at Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge. In fact, it has been a record-nesting year for leatherbacks and a great year for loggerhead sea turtles! Take a look at the numbers: <http://www.fws.gov/archiecarr/updates/index.html>

Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge stretches across 20.5 miles between Melbourne Beach and Wabasso Beach along Florida's east coast. It provides nesting habitat for leatherback, loggerhead, green sea turtles, and the occasional Kemp's ridley (one this year, two last year).



photo: Vince Lamb

The Endangered Species Act, and education and outreach from the refuge and partners are a big part of the increase in nesting numbers over the last few years. The University of Central Florida (UCF) and the Friends of the Carr Refuge are two of the amazing organizations that work with the refuge.

Intensive data collected by UCF and Dr. Llewellyn Ehrhart ("Doc") was used to establish the refuge. It was Dr. Archie Carr who reached out to Dr. Ehrhart to survey the beaches, and they quickly realized the stretch of beach that later became Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge was one of the most important sea turtle nesting beaches in the U.S. The 20.5-mile refuge represents 15 to 25 percent of Florida's nesting sea turtles!

UCF's Marine Turtle Research Group tags nests, tags and measures female sea turtles, and takes samples, such as tissue. This provides research on where the turtles have been and what chemicals they've been exposed to. The group also marks the nests in

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disagreeable. We know that our strength to achieve our mutual goals grows in direct proportion to the strength of our working relationships.

Conservation Southern Style recognizes, as one project leader put it, "It's not just about the critters; it's about people too." It factors the human dimension into every decision we make, action we take, and partnership we create. It recognizes that strong working relationships, whether with peers, States, Tribes, Non-Governmental Organizations, or landowners come about through dialogue; and that true dialogue occurs only when both parties feel respected and heard.

The accomplishments we are racking up all involve strong working relationships maintained by continuous dialogue. In the days ahead, I will periodically share with you the stories that are coming across my desk about ways in which you are implementing landscape-scale, science-driven conservation partnerships that are making a difference: such as a refuge manager working with an LCC on refuge expansion; the contribution of our conservation geneticists to SHC; and the work of our Law Enforcement agents in partnering with others on a major bust to protect marine life. So stay tuned for the next exciting episode of Conservation Southern Style—I guarantee you won't be disappointed, and you will be inspired.

In the meantime, as we enter the fall season, opportunities abound for us to create more strong working relationships and stories to tell as we reach out and partner with others in conserving our fish and wildlife legacy. We have a number of conservation celebrations in September and October that celebrate that legacy, including National Wildlife Refuge Week, National Public Lands Day, National Hunting and Fishing Day, and the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. The history behind each of these events is the story of how dedicated

people rose to the challenges of their day and created national efforts to conserve, enhance and protect fish and wildlife resources for use and enjoyment by all Americans. These celebrations provide a great opportunity to dialogue with citizens about things that matter; to share our perspectives as Service employees and to hear what's important to the people for whom we carry out our work. ❖

- *Cindy*

Archie Carr continued...

order to inventory them and get an idea of how many hatchlings emerge, providing information on female reproductive success.

"There's something really amazing about that stretch of beach. In one night we'll get more turtles nesting than some beaches get in one season," said Dr. Kate Mansfield, UCF.

Vincent Lamb is a board member and treasurer of The Friends of the Carr Refuge, which was established in 1991. However, the group went dormant for several years. The organization changed in 2011, when new members like Lamb were recruited and the organization was revived. The Friend's Group leads nighttime guided walks to view nesting Loggerhead sea turtles during June and July, the peak of their nesting season.

These guided walks give attendees the opportunity to experience something few people ever get to witness. "Taking people out that have never seen turtles nesting on the beach and letting them have this up-close and personal experience is extremely gratifying," said Lamb.

The Friends Group has begun doing morning turtle talks, taking attendees to hatched turtle nests and counting how many turtles hatched from egg remains. These types of outreach are helping to communicate the importance of this sea turtle nesting beach and how to respect nesting sea turtles.

The continued work of Archie Carr National Wildlife Refuge and its outstanding partners is ensuring future generations the opportunity to witness these amazing creatures. ❖

Employee Spotlight

Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge remembers former wildlife officer William "Barney" Clifford Cone

By Sarah Wyatt, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge



Refuge Manager Morton presents the Special Act Award to Jewett V. Hall and William C. Cone for their work apprehending alligator hunters, photo: USFWS

"Barney Cone was of the last true, sure enough, swamper game wardens," said Doug Nuss, a former biological technician at the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, who was hired in Cone's position after his retirement.

Present and former refuge staff members, members of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Honor Guard, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources officers joined his family and friends to honor and remember the 96-year-old Cone at his funeral Service on August 9, 2014.

A native of Fargo, Georgia, Cone began working at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in January 1950, as a biological technician and patrolman. He retired on August 29, 1977.

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Employee Spotlight continued...



Cone's pallbearers L to R: Stacey Welch (USFWS), Ranger Daniel North (GA DNR), Zachary Kincaid (UDFWS), RFC Mark Pool (GA DNR), Greg Blanks (USFWS), Corporal Jason Shipes (GA DNR), Pamela Garrison (USFWS), Sergeant Patrick Dupree (GA DNR), Jason Vehrs (FWS), James McClelland (USFWS), photo: USFWS.

People swapped stories about Cone's efforts to save American alligators and capture poachers.

Historically, American alligators were depleted from many parts of their range as a result of market-hunting and habitat loss. Market-hunting, hunting without laws or regulations became an easy way for hunters and poachers to make a quick buck on alligator hides.

"It was nothing to see 70 or 80 dead gators left skinned for their hides. There was money to be made. Hunters would come from Florida to poach gators in the Okefenokee," said Jim Shelton, a former Service Law Enforcement Officer.

"Barney Cone was very influential in saving the alligators."

In 1962 Cone and his partner, Jewett V. Hall were awarded a Special Act Award by then Refuge Manager Joe Morton. The award was presented for their persistent work in apprehending alligator hunters. Refuge historical records document photos of guns, camping equipment and supplies that were confiscated by Cone. Although he was a go-getter as a game warden, Cone would care for the criminals he captured.

"Barney and his partner were good at their jobs. They would capture the poachers and handcuff them to trees at night, waiting for daylight. Then Barney would take them home and feed them breakfast before taking them to the courthouse in Waycross," Shelton said.

Doug Nuss, was trained by Cone for four months before Cone retired.

"Barney actually got bit by an alligator while working on the refuge," Nuss remembers. "One day, we had to cross water that was about waist deep. Barney pointed out an old cypress tree that had two markings in it. He told me that those

two markings were from when he got bit in the butt by an alligator. I told him that I didn't believe him, and we crossed to the other side. I teased Barney about his storytelling, and next thing I knew, Barney was bent over pulling his britches down to his ankles, saying 'You see that!?' You see that!?"

Nuss shared the story of Cone and his partner spending to two or three weeks camping in the swamp in pursuit of poachers and hunters. They would travel great distances, up to 35 miles by boat, with no motors, just poling, as old swampers did. Cone and his partner would sleep during the day and move at night, listening and watching for gator poachers.

After meeting Cone and learning of his job, Nuss said that he knew he wanted to do what Barney did for a living. "I said that's the job I want right there...and I got that job." It is no doubt that Cone influenced many who met him. With a career that encompassed nearly three decades, Cone was a pioneer in wildlife law enforcement. From his dangerous pursuit of alligator poachers and other wilderness outlaws, Cone left his mark on the virtually untamed and lawless Okefenokee Swamp. ❖



Guns, camping equipment, and supplies confiscated from alligator hunters on the refuge, photo: USFWS

What's Trending

By Katherine Taylor, External Affairs



Apps: Calling all anglers! Fishbrain is an app where you can log your trips and catches, follow all fishing in your favorite waters, and follow when, where, and how other anglers fish. You can also use their extensive fishing database to catch more and bigger fish. Oh, and it's FREE.

#MostSharedStory: We shared footage on Facebook of an endangered Puerto Rican parrot being banded. Thanks to Regional Director Cindy Dohner for sharing the video; it reached 110,000 people! Watch here: <http://on.fb.me/1vFybo>

Social Media: A tweet of a Florida panther kitten reached 156,644 people and was ranked #1 for September 13, 2014, by GreatGovTweets (social media metric for government accounts).

Culture: Have you noticed online personality quizzes taking over your Facebook newsfeed? Well, even wildlife is getting in on the action. Want to know what kind of fish you are? Visit: <http://www.fishbrain.com/quiz/> ❖

Follow the Leader

Acquanetta Reese and Laura Maloof, executive assistants, RD's Office

By Jennifer Strickland, External Affairs



Acquanetta and Laura, photo: Jennifer Strickland, USFWS

Please give us a short background on your career thus far and how you became an Executive Assistant?

Laura looks to Acquanetta and says, "Well, how did you become one?" They both laugh.

Acquanetta: I came on board with the Service in a temporary position, filing permits with Migratory Birds in 2002. I went from there to Ecological Services where I moved around a bit, working with endangered species, Section 6, NEPA, etc. Next, I provided administrative support to Dave Fleming and John Hefner (both have since retired), the Program Supervisors for the Ecological Services field offices. I eventually became the Executive Assistant for the Ecological Services Assistant Regional Director, and from there became the Deputy Regional Director's Assistant and finally the Executive Assistant for Cindy Dohner in 2012.

Laura: I began working with the Fish and Wildlife Service when I was 19. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. My cousin, Evelyn Azar, was a Service employee, and she told me they were looking for a receptionist. I started as a temporary position not to exceed 120 days, and 27 years later I'm still here! I was the Executive Assistant in Refuges for just under 10 years, then I was moved to the Regional Director's office in January 2012, as the Deputy Regional Director's Executive Assistant.

What's your favorite part of your job?

Laura: I'm weird, I like travel. It provides a sense of accomplishment because it's something you start from the beginning with just a travel reservation, then you're building a package, and in the end, they get paid.

Acquanetta: I enjoy working with our Service people; people who are passionate about what they're doing. In my past experience in the workforce, most employees were working just to earn a paycheck, but the employees here really enjoy doing what they're doing, and I applaud that. I think that's wonderful! With our Fish and Wildlife Service folks as well as other agencies and state offices, even the public, you can hear the passion

in their voices when they're talking about certain wildlife issues. This is the first place I've been where people genuinely enjoy what they're doing.

Laura: I agree!

What's something you do in your job that folks in the region might not know about?

Acquanetta: I've worked with the Thanksgiving Food Drive and the Angel Tree in the Regional Office for several years now. For the Angel Tree we collect donations and provide to homeless shelters and juvenile group homes. Each angel on the tree represents a child in need. I love it because I know we're doing something worthwhile!

Laura adds: There was one year we did our own Service family on the Angel Tree. We had angels on the tree representing people that had lost everything in Katrina. That year, everybody went above and beyond with their donations.

Laura: I collect and review the Weekly Highlights that are sent out to the region. I also have one foster child right now, his name is David Viker. Since Annette retired, I've been handling David's vouchers and travel arrangements.

What skills are absolutely crucial for a good Executive Assistant to have?

Laura: Paying attention to detail and a positive outlook. I review all correspondence, looking for the little things whether it's grammar, spelling, spacing, or something else.

Likewise with travel, if I have Mike going to the wrong airport in the right city, it can be a huge problem. Also, when he travels for meetings, I put together the briefing materials. It's the little things, like having a map with directions, or an address at least! They have enough on them without having to worry about where they're going or where they're staying for the night.

Acquanetta: I think communication skills. You have to be able to communicate with your internal folks as well as your external folks. The Regional Office receives calls from congressional offices, state directors, the public and even senior-level management within our Headquarters.

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Follow the Leader continued...

You have to be able to communicate with all of them effectively.

Oh and of course, computer skills.

Every time I see either of you in the hallway, you're cordial and downright pleasant. None of us have good days every day, so how do you maintain that positive, professional attitude?

Laura: Whatever's weighing on you, that's left in the house when you leave. When you're here, people don't want to walk into a doom and gloom office, they want an inviting atmosphere. People can hear a smile on the other end of the phone, and they can also tell when someone's distracted.

When visitors come through our doors, they're the most important thing. We're also the first face they see before Cindy and Mike. They don't want us growling, "What do you want?"

Acquanetta: I try not to take life so seriously. I have bad days too, but when I do, I remember to smile that much more.

What advice might you give to someone looking to follow in your footsteps up to the RD's office someday?

Acquanetta: Be ready to work in a fast-paced environment. Always maintain your professionalism, be quick on your feet, and every now and then, laugh at yourself whenever you make mistakes, but don't forget to learn from them too.

Laura: Keep a positive attitude and be willing to help others. We all make mistakes and all you can say is, oh man I am sorry! It also helps that we have two amazing supervisors.

Acquanetta: I agree, that doesn't hurt! ❖

Friends and Volunteers



Veterans enjoy fly fishing on the Obey River; photo: Andy Currie, USFWS

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing at Dale Hollow

By Andy Currie, Dale Hollow

This summer, The Friends of Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery teamed with the Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery, Middle Tennessee Fly Fishers, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Project Healing Waters to sponsor a day of fly fishing on the Obey River and hatchery public fishing area for area veterans. A total of 25 veterans from Murfreesboro, Cookeville and Nashville attended.

The day was funded, in part, through a National Environmental Education Foundation Public Lands Every Events grant sponsored by Toyota. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Incorporated is dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans through fly fishing and associated activities, including education and outreach.

Following a day of fishing, the veterans enjoyed a catered meal at the Corps picnic pavilion located at the Dale Hollow Dam Recreation Area. The meal was provided by the Friends Group. The extra food was donated to a local church for their weekly free meal program. Friends Group members, hatchery staff members, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency officers and local volunteers helped make the day a success. Special thanks to the Corps for scheduling water releases around the event. Plans are underway to hold a similar event next year. ❖

Local students work at Dale Hollow

By Andy Currie, Dale Hollow



Ashley and Autumn clean raceways, photo: USFWS

Clay County, Tennessee, residents Ashley Hancock, Autumn Boles, Ben Upton and Tyler Cherry spent this summer working at the Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery as Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) enrollees. The three objectives of the YCC program are to accomplish needed conservation work on public lands, provide gainful summer employment to youth for about eight weeks and develop an understanding and appreciation in participating youth of the nation's natural environment and heritage.

Ashley, Autumn, Ben, and Tyler helped the hatchery staff with feeding fish, collecting and counting dead fish, cleaning tanks and raceways, moving fish around the hatchery, distributing fish to local waters, performing janitorial work, maintaining the public fishing area, and carrying out general grounds maintenance. The enrollees also had the opportunity to help with the annual fish health inspection at the hatchery. One of the highlights of this year's program was that the enrollees toured Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery in Jamestown, Kentucky, and spent time in the visitor and environmental education center. Selection of enrollees was done by random drawing from applications received from Clay County High School students. If funding is available, two boys and two girls will be selected to work at the hatchery next summer in the YCC Program. ❖



Ben assists Warm Springs Fish Health Center personnel with the annual Fish Health Inspection, photo: USFWS

Can YCC change your life?

By: David Young, Sam D. Hamilton National Wildlife Refuge



YCC students help refuge staff members install one of several visitor information kiosks throughout the refuge, photo: USFWS

of grumbling about how early they had come to work and how late they had went to bed. But, I heard almost as many questions asked about the plants, animals, and management techniques that they saw all around them. One day while hauling a heavy load of railroad ties across the refuge, I asked one of the YCC members what her college plans were in the fall. While she admitted that she wasn't sure what she was going to study, she did say that she'd originally thought about engineering, but was now considering a major in wildlife biology. While I may never know what it was that prompted her to consider changing her career ambitions, I have to wonder if her exposure to wildlife and the outdoors here on the refuge played a role and sparked an interest. ❖

Five local high school students spent eight weeks of their summer working at Sam D. Hamilton Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge in east-central Mississippi. The YCC students assisted refuge staff with maintenance projects that helped them appreciate how much time, money, and effort it takes to maintain a refuge for public use. Besides working long days in the stifling heat and humidity of a Mississippi summer, the students also had opportunities to get acquainted with the natural side of the refuge. They accompanied biologists to help them monitor red-cockaded woodpecker fledglings and joined Mississippi State University researchers to survey and band migratory birds.

Having worked with the students throughout the summer, I heard plenty

Dale Hollow's Second Annual Wilderness Day Camp

By Andy Currie, Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery

The Friends of Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery hosted the Second Annual Wilderness Day Camp in July. The event was co-sponsored by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It was funded, in part, through a National Environmental Education Foundation Public Lands Every Events grant sponsored by Toyota.

All of the activities except the hatchery tour took place at the nearby Corps picnic pavilion located at the Dale Hollow Dam Recreation Area. Eighty children aged four to fifteen enjoyed the activities. BB-gun and archery target shooting, popular activities at last year's event, were offered again this year at one of the stations. Jackson County Wildlife Officer Tom Gothard led this activity. Clay County Wildlife Officer Travis Cowan oversaw the target archery activity. Staff members from the Tennessee Ecological Services Field Office in Cookeville assisted with two of the activities. David Pelren gave a presentation on bats, featuring a bat-beetle chase game that the children



Learning target archery, photo: Andy Currie, USFWS

enjoyed. Ken McDonald helped out again this year by teaching children about animal tracks and scat. This presentation featured a hands-on session making plaster of Paris animal tracks with rubber molds. A presentation on water safety was given by Corps Ranger Bobby Bartlett and his wife Geneva. Clay County Wildlife Officer Bill Moulton shared his knowledge

of wildlife with the children at another station. Friends of Dale Hollow National Fish Hatchery President Paul Boyce manned the fly fishing station. The day's events were topped off with a tour of the hatchery where the children were allowed to feed the trout in outdoor raceways. ❖

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery's 28th Annual Catch A Rainbow Kids Fishing Derby a huge success

By Moria Painter, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

Wolf Creek's 28th Annual Catch A Rainbow Kid's Fishing Derby drew more than 3,500 people to the hatchery in June. This event coincided with National Fishing and Boating Week and free fishing week-end in Kentucky. The event is the largest of its kind in the state and one of the largest in the country. Awaiting the junior anglers were 4,000 rainbow trout that were stocked prior to the event.

Each angler received a free Catch A Rainbow t-shirt and enjoyed all the hot dogs, soda, bottled water, cotton candy and popcorn they could eat. Every participant received an outdoor related

prize, such as fishing poles, tackle boxes, game calls, outdoor chairs, camping lights, and bug collection kits.

The event was organized by the hatchery and Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc. The derby was possible through the generous support and contributions of many local, regional and national sponsors and businesses. The event included the participation of 100 volunteers, making it a true example of community partnering. Through such teamwork, an event with a value of more than \$25,000 occurred with little or cost to any one agency due to the generous donations of a myriad of individuals and organizations. ❖



*Look at all the fish I caught!
photo: Teresa DeVore, USFWS*

Bragging Rights

Southeast Regional employees attend Blacks in Government National Training Institute

By Ruth Benson, Realty



L to R: Jennifer Gilchrist, Clifford Lee, Jackie Parrish, Cassandra Burney-Thomas, Ruth Benson, and Stacie Nesby, photo: USFWS

The 2014 Blacks in Government National Training Institute held in July in Las Vegas, was a smashing success. Participation numbers were at an all-time high. The workshops were incredible, and the keynote speakers were spectacular.

The Southeast Region was honored to have our own Jackie Parrish serve as one of the agency representatives for the Department of Interior. She delivered an excellent presentation in collaboration with the Bureau of Reclamation, addressing “engaging the next generation” (youth) in various STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematic programs, while upholding the mission to protect America’s natural resources and heritage. To learn more refer to The Secretary of Interior’s Order No. 3332, Engaging the Next Generation.

The Atlanta Metro Chapter of Blacks in Government is on the rise with membership of committed individuals who want to make a difference throughout the local communities with participation in various diverse outreach programs. To learn more about our non-profit 501(C) 3, please refer to our website at www.atlantametrobig.org. ❖

A day on Arabia Mountain

By Katherine Taylor, External Affairs

Tamara Johnson, an energy biologist for the Georgia Ecological Services Field Office, stands inside the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Center in Lithonia, Georgia, with a bucket full of candy and a smile on her face. I arrive at 8:30 a.m. to help with the day’s adventure, and am immediately greeted with a hug and handed a Reese’s cup. Johnson is leading a scavenger hunt for a group of Arabia Mountain High School seniors who she’s had the pleasure of working with throughout the year. Today, the students will be given clues containing GPS coordinates that will lead them to endangered plants found on the mountain.

Scavenger hunt goals: Help students become more familiar with GPS units, familiarize them with endangered plants found on the mountain and their habitat, and give students exposure to the natural resource management techniques that are used by Fish and Wildlife Service employees and partners employed on Arabia Mountain.

The students file into the small building. They are as alert as I would expect any high school seniors to be 9:00 a.m. However, as Johnson explains the details of the scavenger hunt, the students become enthusiastic about the prospect of getting outside and competing in teams. Though, it would be hard not to become enthused with the passion and excitement that Johnson radiates when she speaks. One final overview of the GPS systems and the students are out the door.

An agency statistic is what first inspired Johnson to become involved with youth outreach. “Sometime last year I happened upon a statistic for our agency that stuck with me: Thirty-eight percent of the Service’s workforce is over the age of 50. Since there will be a new generation of conservation professionals in just a few years, I felt driven to help expose youth to our agency and career opportunities within it,” said Johnson.

Arabia Mountain High School was an obvious choice for Johnson. The school is located on the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, a granite outcrop on the edge of the Atlanta metropolitan area. It is also a “Green Ribbon” school, an award presented in recognition of its environmental focus, and it offers a



Arabia Mountain High School seniors who participated in the scavenger hunt, photo: Katherine Taylor, USFWS

year-long Natural Resources Management course for graduating seniors. “All of these factors pointed to an ideal partnership between us and a group of interested youth,” said Johnson.

I walk around the mountain with Johnson, so we can be off on the sidelines during the scavenger hunt should the students need assistance. We catch glimpses of the students as they make their way across the mountain. As we watch a team run towards a clue, it becomes apparent that the mix of a field trip day and outdoor exploration has elevated their spirits.

During our walk on the mountain, I asked Johnson what the main thing was that she wanted the kids to take away from this experience. “I want the students to understand that they share a neighborhood with some of the coolest natural areas in Georgia, and that they have the privilege of enjoying and protecting it! After working with the GPS units, hopefully the students will feel competent, which would plant the seed that they are capable of becoming scientists and natural resource managers,” said Johnson.

After an hour and half of exploration, the students begin returning to the nature center. They all agree that it was exciting to go out and experience the things they were learning about inside the classroom. One student shared that it was “really cool” to use GPS to locate clues. Demonstrating that Johnson knows her audience, she whips out the bowl of candy and passes it around to all the students, which is met with cheers and applause.

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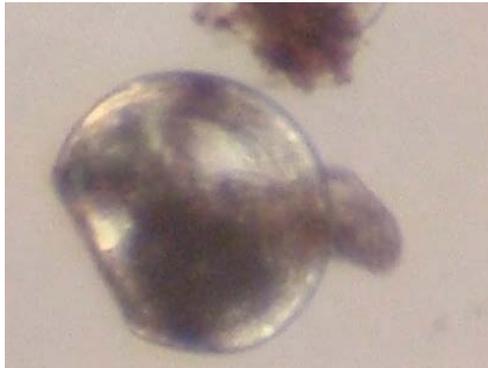
Arabia Mountain continued...

From the outside looking in, it's clear that Johnson has met all of her objectives for the day. She successfully exposed the students to the natural world, and in her words, "planted the seed" that they are capable of becoming scientists.

So what did Johnson take away from the experience? "I saw the looks in the students' eyes after the event, the look of happiness from being outside and exploring all day, and I was moved and humbled," she said. "It is a privilege to facilitate these opportunities, and I feel inspired to do more events that cultivate a love for the environment in youth. This event helped build my confidence in being able to take an idea and turn it into a successful program." ❖

Great news—Identification of the host fish for a threatened freshwater mussel species in Louisiana!

By Monica Sikes, Louisiana Ecological Services Office



Newly metamorphosed Louisiana pearlshell mussel. Its foot is extending through the opening, photo: Tony Brady, USFWS

Tony Brady from the Natchitoches National Fish Hatchery solved a 23-year mystery. He identified the host fish for the Louisiana Pearlshell mussel, federally listed as threatened. Several partners were involved in the effort including the Louisiana Ecological Services Office, the U.S. Forest Service, the University of New Orleans, and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Natural Heritage Program. In partnership with Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries' Hatcheries Department, host fish trials

were attempted at Booker Fowler Fish Hatchery in 2014, because the hatchery's water source closely matches that of the mussel's home streams.

In March 2014, Tony and staff members from the Service's Louisiana Ecological Services Office and the University of New Orleans gathered potential host fish from streams and transported them to Booker Fowler, where fish were separated into aquaria by species. Tony returned to the streams and collected four gravid Louisiana Pearlshell mussels which were held for four days at Booker Fowler until the mussels naturally released their glochidia. The glochidia were then used to infest 13 different fish species. Adult mussels were then returned to their streams. In April 2014, the Redspot darter was found to be the primary host fish for the species. Secondary hosts were Redfin shiners, striped Shiners, Creek chubsuckers, and Bluegill and Longear sunfish. Thanks to this successful research, we are truly making great strides in the recovery of the threatened Louisiana Pearlshell mussel. ❖

Protecting swallow-tailed kite roost at Lake Woodruff?

By Stan Howarter, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge

The summer staff members from Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge met with biologists from Migratory Birds to discuss ways to enhance protection of the refuge's swallow-tailed kite roost. Lake Woodruff protects the second largest pre-migratory swallow-tailed kite roost in North America. Swallow-tailed kites from across the breeding range in the Southeastern United States converge at Lake Woodruff before making their journey to the wintering grounds in South America. On the morning of the visit there were an estimated 1,400 birds on the roost.

Although the roost is tucked away in a remote corner of the refuge, disturbance from the public is becoming a greater concern. Refuges are already seeing the growth of guided tours to breeding bird colonies and increasing interest in photographing spectacular congregations of birds. Locations of sensitive sites can spread quickly through social media. With the proliferation of programs like



A swallow-tailed kite, photo: USFWS

Google Earth and smart phones with GPS mapping ability, it is becoming harder to keep these hidden gems hidden. The increasing use of direct drive "mud boats" and airboats give an ever growing human population greater access to previously undisturbed areas.

Human activity around the roost needs to be monitored next year at the roost during this critical pre-migration time period. This information would allow the refuge to develop strategies about ways to address current threats without drawing additional attention to the location of the roost. ❖

Building Bridges

By Morgan Wolf, South Carolina Ecological Services

In South Carolina, close coordination and dedicated teamwork between the Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highways Administration, South Carolina Department of Transportation and Scott Bridge Company, has turned a once



Best management practices were strictly followed to prevent impacts to critical habitat for the Carolina heelsplitter; photo: Morgan Wolf, USFWS

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Building Bridges continued...

daunting bridge replacement project into a model for endangered species protection.

The US 25 bridge project in Edgefield County crosses over critical habitat for the endangered Carolina heelsplitter, a freshwater mussel. The Service was first contacted in 2009 regarding the need to replace the existing structure.

Through the consultation process, conservation measures were identified that dramatically reduced the potential for negative impacts to the heelsplitter and its designated critical habitat. During

construction, a South Carolina Department of Transportation biologist closely monitored and reported information to the Service regarding all project activities, including best management practices, stream habitat conditions, and adherence to the agreed upon conservation measures.

All entities involved maintained open lines of communication, which led to the swift and effective resolution of species concerns as they arose. This would not have been possible if not for the dedication of the Service's partners, and their sincere desire to do what is right for the resource. ❖

Red wolf pups thrive at the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center

By Patricia Midgett, Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge

Will the red wolf pup Colbert ever grow into those long legs? Colbert and his brother Jewell received their final, four-month vaccinations in August. Named after Interior Secretary Sally Jewell

and television comedian Stephen Colbert, the pups reside at the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center in Awendaw South Carolina, the visitor center for Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge and Francis Marion National Forest.

Jewell and Colbert were two of six pups born at the Center on April 8. Four of the pups survived. Two pups were relocated to Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina and are being fostered by parents in the wild.



Brian King, veterinarian, and wolf caretaker Rob Johnson gave Colbert a health check, photo: Patricia Midgett, USFWS



Four endangered Red wolf pups born at the Sewee Visitor and Environmental Education Center; photo: Raye Nilius, USFWS

Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge continues to play an integral role in the recovery program for the Red wolf. It was on Bulls Island in 1978 that the successful release of two wolves demonstrated the feasibility of reintroducing the red wolf into the wild. Bulls Island became the first island breeding site for the recovery of the species. In a span of 18 years (1987-2005), 26 pups were born on the island.

Red wolves are housed at the Sewee Center for observation and education. The Center is open Wednesday – Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with red wolf interpretive programs and feedings scheduled on Thursdays and Saturdays. Visitors can contact the Center at 843/928 3368 for more information about the wolves and other educational programs. ❖

Remembering the passenger pigeon 100 years after extinction

By Monica Sikes, Louisiana Ecological Services Office



Passenger pigeon coloring page exhibit, photo: USFWS

September 1, 2014, marked the centennial anniversary of the extinction of the passenger pigeon. This is the first extinction that can be directly attributed to humans. On September 22, the Louisiana Ecological Services Office hosted an event for its employees' children to remember the passenger pigeon 100 years after extinction. Children and adults folded 115 origami passenger pigeons, which were counted toward the goal of 1,000,000 origami pigeons established by foldtheflock.org to commemorate the species. We watched videos and a slideshow about the species and the events leading up to its extinction. We also learned about Martha, the last passenger pigeon, who died in the Cincinnati Zoo on September 1, 1914. We watched a virtual flock of passenger pigeons that numbered in the millions and heard what it would sound like when one of these huge flocks flew overhead. We had a lot of fun playing a kids versus adults trivia game using all the information we had just learned. Of course, the kids won by a landslide! We also colored pictures of passenger pigeons and hung them on the wall as an art display, and lots of snacks were consumed by all. To conclude the event, the children received a personalized and dated certificate for their participation. This event was a fun and educational way to highlight how the passenger pigeon went from the most numerous bird species in North America to extinct in roughly 40 years. ❖



Origami passenger pigeon project, photo, USFWS

Marsh accretion measurements at coastal refuges in South Carolina

By Nicole Rankin, Southeast Region Inventory and Monitoring Network

Staff members from the Southeast Region Inventory and Monitoring (I&M) Network tested a sediment coring method while conducting marsh elevation monitoring at Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge on June 3, and Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge on June 4, 2014.

Nicole Rankin, I&M coastal ecologist, and Theresa Thom, I&M aquatic ecologist, used the cryogenic coring method to extract a sediment core from established marker horizon plots at both refuges. Using this method, liquid nitrogen is delivered through a steel hose and copper bullet into the marsh soil. The soil surrounding the copper bullet will freeze to the bullet resulting in a frozen core of marsh sediment.

Initially, marker horizon plots were established using feldspar clay to produce a visible white layer on top of marsh sediment. Since establishment, sediment has naturally deposited on top of this horizon. The thickness of the sediment that has accumulated over the marker horizon is measured using calipers in order to determine sediment accretion.

After some initial troubleshooting, Nicole and Theresa were able to successfully collect cryo-cores and measure accretion from all established plots at ACE Basin and Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuges. Some other refuges participating in the South Atlantic



Nicole Rankin using the cryogenic coring method to collect a sediment core from ACE Basin National Wildlife Refuge, photo: Theresa Thom, USFWS

Marsh Elevation Monitoring project will be trained in how to use this sampling method for collecting sediment cores.

Thanks to Brett Craig, Mark Purcell, Chris Hill (Coastal Carolina University), Jared Chrisp and Sam Buzeleciu for assistance with sampling and logistics! ❖

Wolf Creek to extend Hatchery Creek

By Moria Painter, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

On August 8, 2014, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery welcomed representatives and residents from the local area to observe a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Hatchery Creek Extension Project. Speakers included James Gray, Project Leader of Wolf Creek; Gregory Johnson, Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources; Lt. Col. John Hudson

Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nashville District; and Eric DaWalt representing the three design and build firms of RidgeWater, LLC, Ecogro, and Stantec. Several staff members from the various agencies involved in the design and implementation of the project also attended.

The Hatchery Creek Extension Project will extend the existing Hatchery Creek about one mile. The new extension will provide diverse habitat for fish and wildlife and create conditions favorable for trout spawning and nursery habitat to encourage natural reproduction of

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Wolf Creek continued...



James Gray, project leader Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, photo: Jonathan Malriat, USFWS

trout, with the addition of riffles, runs, glides, pools and wetlands. The extension will significantly improve water quality in the stream and the Cumberland River making it more inviting for aquatic life. This project will create a stream unlike anything in the eastern United States; trout fishermen around the county will add Wolf Creek's Hatchery Creek to their list of must fish locals.

Estimated cost of the project is \$1.8 million, and it is expected to be completed in about six months. The benefits of this project will be reaped for generations to come by adding millions of dollars to the local economy and many recreation opportunities. ❖

Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery hosts Nature Rocks! Family Nature Club

By Moria Painter, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery

Each month Wolf Creek joins up with the local Russell County library for fun, interactive programs that bring kids and their families closer to nature. The Nature Rocks! Family Nature Club is hosted by the hatchery during May through October of each year.

In June I presented All About Birds to an attentive group of 12 participants. The group participated in interactive activities of Bird Yoga and getting to know your neighbor bird wise. I also discussed the biology and physical characteristics of birds, what they eat, where they live and different species. The class made feeders for the birds which included peanuts and



Getting ready to fish at Hatchery Creek, photo: Bailee Olson, USFWS volunteer

fruit on a string. After the group enjoyed a healthy snack of fruit, two librarians read books about birds to the class.

In July, more than 28 participants joined Environmental Education Intern Johnathan Malriat on a fishing trip. Wolf Creek provided a tasty fish-themed snack, fishing gear, and bait. Participants received fishing instructions at Hatchery Creek, which was stocked for the event! The kids had a great time learning about fishing and enjoying the outdoors. ❖

2014 Junior Refuge Ranger Summer Camp at Okefenokee

By Sarah Wyatt, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge

On July 23-25th, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge held the 2014 Junior Refuge Ranger Summer Camp. Twenty-three children from the surrounding community enjoyed three days of educational opportunities and fun. Highlights included a boat tour by Okefenokee Adventures, games at the Chesser Island homestead, demonstrations by forestry, biology, and fire teams, and fishing and archery. Great support was offered by refuge staff members, and refuge volunteers were instrumental in helping with the planning and organization of the camp. At the camp's conclusion, all 23 participants were awarded official Junior Refuge Ranger badges as family and friends watched at the official badge ceremony. Afterwards, participants enjoyed cake and punch on the patio of the Visitor Center. The Junior Refuge Ranger Camp was possible because of the support and collaboration between Okefenokee Wildlife League, Okefenokee Adventures, and our many refuge volunteers. ❖



Participants hiking to the Owl's Roost Tower, photo: Barbara Kramer, USFWS



Junior Refuge Rangers fishing in refuge Boat Basin, photo: Barbara Kramer, USFWS

Oke Archery Days

By Sarah Wyatt, Okefenokee Refuge Complex

Throughout the summer the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge hosted several Oke Archery Days, using the guidelines set by the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP). The refuge partnered with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division, to receive the equipment including bows, targets and safety equipment. At the Oke Archery Days, NASP certified instructors demonstrate to participants how to safely and properly use a bow and arrow as well as allow participants to demonstrate their marksmanship abilities.

Oke Archery Days is a popular program that has served more than 100 participants since it began in June. This free, family-friendly program has encouraged local communities to visit the refuge, as well as engage in other

activities that the refuge has to offer. As the Oke Archery Days continue into the fall, the refuge will continue to offer more fun and challenging archery shoots including adding three-dimensional targets, fun archery games like balloon pops and tic-tac-toe, and even incorporating bow hunting and tree stand safety, as well as bringing in different types of archery equipment to display the evolution of the bow and arrow. ❖

Right: Archery Instruction: Archers make their first shot under the instruction of Ranger Sarah Wyatt, photo: Alex Staalner; USFWS volunteer



Fishing derby and casting a success at Banks Lake

By Sarah Wyatt, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Complex

Sixty-seven children from southern Georgia and northern Florida participated in a fun-filled day of activities at the Banks Lake 14th Annual Youth Fishing Derby. The event was held in conjunction with National Fishing and Boating Week in June, promoting safe and responsible fishing, boating, and water stewardship. The fishing derby portion of the event was held at Flatlanders Lake in Lakeland, Georgia. Children aged 3 to 15 competed for prizes for most fish caught and largest fish caught in each age group.

Later, the event moved to Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Kids demonstrated their skills with casting, designing their own t-shirts, and enjoyed getting their faces painted. Participants also enjoyed free food and drinks donated by the Valdosta Bassmasters. Many tried their hand at worm gruntin' and knot tying, learned about alligators, and challenged their fish identification skills. An awards ceremony and raffle concluded the event. This event is a successful partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Valdosta Bassmasters, Okefenokee Wildlife League, the City of Lakeland, and area businesses. ❖



One of the winners enjoying her trophy after a great day of fishing, photo: Barbara Kramer; USFWS volunteer

Merritt Island volunteers help save pollinators

By Nancy Corona, Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge.

Over the past few decades, honey bees, native bees, birds, bats and butterflies have been declining significantly. In June President Obama issued a Presidential Memorandum on Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators that lists a number of steps the government is taking to tackle the problems facing our pollinators.

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge volunteers and staff members also have implemented pollinator initiatives. The refuge hosted the third annual Family Pollinator Event celebrating National Pollinator Week in June. Volunteers and staff presented programs and hosted craft activities and a pollinator scavenger hunt. Live butterflies and caterpillars were displayed along with pollinator friendly native plants to engage and educate visitors. Our dedicated crew of butterfly monitors cleared and planted swamp milkweed along the banks of the visitor center's freshwater pond to provide host plants for the declining Monarch butterfly.

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Merritt Island continued...



Ethan Fox holds Gulf Fritillary caterpillar and Katie Fox holds Queen Caterpillar; photo: Nancy Corona, USFWS

The volunteer crew conducts a monthly butterfly survey and compiles data for University of Florida's Butterfly Monitoring Network. The public is invited to participate and learn about butterfly surveys which typically begin with a photo presentation and coffee and doughnuts. No experience is necessary to participate! Annually, the refuge conducts the Fourth of July Count for the North American Butterfly Association. Weekly, the butterfly and wildlife garden is tended by the refuge's Friday Garden Team.

Volunteers also presented a Night Prowl and Moth Night program to celebrate National Moth Week. Black lights were staged and a concoction of fermented beer and over ripe bananas was placed outside the visitor center to attract night time pollinators. The visiting moths were photographed and identified. Through their actions, refuge volunteers and staff members encourage visitors to save pollinators. ❖

What you didn't know

Music and Wildlife?

By Morey Bell, Port of Memphis, Tennessee

Do you know that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plays an important role in the regulation of the music industry?

Many musical instruments are composed of wildlife products, such as the abalone inlays on guitars, elephant ivory frogs on violin bows, skins on drums, and the mother of pearl keys on a saxophone. Inspectors in the Office of Law Enforcement are responsible for

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Wildlife Inspector Morey Bell in the Law Enforcement booth, photo: Gena Vazquez

Music and Wildlife continued...

regulating the international trade in these wildlife products, and ensuring that members of the industry are in compliance with federal law.

Members of the Office of Law Enforcement and Division of Management Authority made important connections at the Summer National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) conference. NAMM is a non-profit organization representing the global music industry. The organization hosts their annual summer trade show in Nashville, Tennessee. Music industry professionals, buyers, manufacturers and artists gather for educational seminars, new product demonstrations, and industry networking. This year's event featured 438 exhibitors ranging from small start-up companies to some of the biggest names in the industry, such as CF Martin and Yamaha.

Wildlife Inspectors Bob Herndon, Jeffrey Steele, and Morey Bell, along with Law Enforcement Support Assistant, Gena Vazquez, represented the Office of Law Enforcement, while Darcy Vargas represented the Division of Management Authority at the conference. They provided information to manufacturers and buyers, attended an import export forum, answered questions, and clarified new and existing regulations. ❖

What do think?

Please help us decide what stories or people you would like to see featured in future editions of E-Grits. We'll use these recommendations to produce future stories for Employee Spotlight, Follow the Leader, Something You Didn't Know About Me, and potentially a Front Page Story.

Follow this link to share your recommendations: <http://bit.ly/EgritsPoll>

If you have any questions, please contact me at Elsie_Davis@fws.gov or 404/679 7107

Thank you,

Elsie

156,644 hits on Twitter.. You go Kitty!

FWC photo by Carli Segelson

