



# Focus on "Friends"



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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Note From Cindy Dohner, Regional Director

Dear Friends,

Happy new year! We are in the heart of winter, yet I can't help but feel a little thrill of excitement as we take on the new adventures that await us in 2010. For those of us who love the outdoors, each season has its purpose and its promise. In winter, it's the innate wisdom in dormancy, as plants and animals conserve their energy in cold temperatures; and the promise of spring that hides beneath frozen ground or inside leafless trees. Yet even in winter, we know that many things are still happening. In fact, for those Friends who support our Florida field stations, winter may be your busiest time of year as the species known as "snowbirds" head south for warmer climes.

Here in the Southeast Region, it is fair to say that things are popping. Just a few short months ago, the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service announced my selection as Southeast Regional Director. I am deeply honored to be chosen to lead what I think is the finest, most dedicated workforce and cadre of volunteers that can be found in the field of conservation.

I have been entrusted with a Region whose track record for accomplishments and "firsts" is heralded Service-wide and at the Department level. I think it is fair to say that many others look to us for leadership and innovation in everything from strategic habitat conservation to fire management and law enforcement to disaster preparedness, and yes...to Friends Groups and volunteer activities. So right off the bat I want to thank you for all that you have done to help benefit the fish, wildlife, plants, habitats and people of the Southeast Region through your tireless efforts on our behalf.

My job as Regional Director, as I see it, will be to sustain, and more importantly, to strengthen our capabilities, and expand our fish and wildlife conservation accomplishments more broadly. The 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges to our fish and wildlife resources and habitats, coupled with the strong Department support for our conservation mission, make it clear that this is our moment in history. As I told our employees recently, we cannot afford a failure of imagination. We must look beyond what is apparent and envision what is possible. We must harness that power of imagination to innovate new and better ways of getting our work done. And we must do it all with integrity. As always, we are counting on you, our Friends, to help us every step of the way.

We are clear on our mission priorities. In terms of how we will carry out our mission going forward, my areas of emphasis can best be described in terms of Our People, Our Partners, and Our Public.

**Our People:** I know that no matter how high we wish to reach in accomplishing good things for the resource, nothing can get done without the commitment and creativity of our people—our employees and our volunteers. My intention is to use every available venue and tool to better understand the issues you face every day. I also am committed to our continuous improvement, particularly actively growing our scientific and technological capabilities. We will all need to work together to remove the barriers to fully harness our collective capability. We are "one Service for the resource." Therein lies our strength, as a Region and as a Service.

**Our Partners:** Our commitment to our partners follows close on the heels of our commitment to our people. We will all engage fully in fostering and leveraging our partnerships with State, Federal, military, non-government, and private entities, and certainly with you, our Friends. The conservation challenges to sustainable populations of fish and wildlife resources we are all trying to address know no boundaries, State, Federal, or private.

As the issue of accelerating climate change has made clear, addressing 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation challenges will require unparalleled collaboration across the conservation community, across the Region and the nation, and across the world. Implementing our strategic plan for climate change and its attendant Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) will require a multitude of partners, most notably with our sister agency, the U.S. Geological Survey. With our partners, we are launching two LCCs already (South Atlantic and Gulf Coast Plain Ozark), and I am hopeful we will be able to establish a third within this fiscal year with the help of our partners.



Cindy Dohner,  
Regional Director

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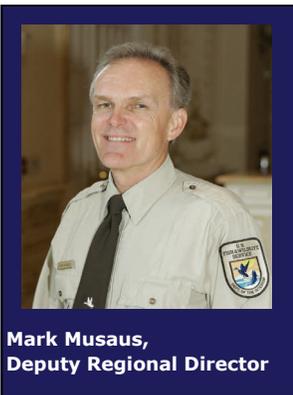
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**Our Public:** When I consider the life journey that brought me to this job as Regional Director, I know it began with my childhood connection to nature. I grew up hunting and fishing with my dad in the woods and waters of Pennsylvania and loved every moment of it. That passion for the outdoors, especially when it is nurtured early on, has staying power. No doubt mine is a story that may be repeated thousands of times by employees and volunteers across the Service.

My goal is to see this Region increase its efforts to connect people with nature, formally and informally; for what we love, we tend to protect. We want to do all we can to foster our citizens' love of wild places and wild animals so they become stakeholders in the future of wildlife. And that's where you, our Friends, are so vitally important. Our Refuges and Hatcheries offer wonderful opportunities to make that connection. They will also play a key role in our efforts to address climate change with our partners and to educate the public about the importance of their efforts to reduce their carbon footprints, as well as provide opportunities for both consumptive and non-consumptive outdoor recreation and outdoor "classrooms" for environmental education. I believe every employee and volunteer is an ambassador for the fish and wildlife resources of this Region. Every Service employee and volunteer I know has a passion for fish and wildlife and the outdoors that is contagious.

I will be looking to each of you for your feedback and ideas on how we can continue to build on a great foundation of service and accomplishment in the Southeast Region. In return, I promise to give you the best that is within me in regard to leadership and listening. Working together, there is no doubt in my mind the sky is the limit in regard to what we can do for fish, wildlife and people.

*Cindy*



**Mark Musaus,  
Deputy Regional Director**

## Note From Mark Musaus, Deputy Regional Director

On January 19, I report to work in the Southeast Region as the new Deputy Regional Director. This is quite an honor to be selected for this position, and I look forward to working with Regional Director Cindy Dohner and the staff in the regional office in support of the field.

It is also an opportunity to go back to the region where I have spent all but three years of my 35-year career. I started at Loxahatchee Refuge in 1974 as a student trainee. After graduating from college in 1975 I went to work full time at Choctaw Refuge. From there I worked at Ding Darling, Piedmont, and Tennessee Refuges as assistant manager and then became the deputy project leader for the Savannah Coastal Refuges in 1990. In 1998 I went full circle so to speak and returned to Loxahatchee Refuge as the project leader. Second only to the wonderful people I have learned from, helped lead, and worked alongside, I have treasured my time in the richness of the Southeast habitats; bottomland

hardwoods, upland pine, swamps, mangrove, and beach/dune in the nearly dozen refuges I helped manage.

In 2007, I was offered the opportunity to move to the headquarters office for the Refuge System in Arlington, VA to become the Chief, Division of Visitor Services and Communications. This position focuses on the people side of refuge management and one of the signature programs is Friends and Partnerships. As project leader, I realized that many of the successes we gained at the refuge, in turning around negative public opinion, in stronger advocacy for protection of the unique Everglades habitats, and improving compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation were due to the support of the our Friends groups and our many partners. As much as I did not want to leave working on a refuge, the chance to work with these programs on a national level was appealing to me.

In this position I have had the chance to meet many of the Refuge System's terrific "friends", both at our two most recent national Friends Conferences and while visiting refuges around the country. Your passion for the resource, for your special refuge and the refuge system continue to invigorate me and keep me excited about the great work that we do.

In my new position, I will be involved with all Fish and Wildlife Service programs, ranging from fish hatcheries to endangered species. The complexity of issues that the Service deals with is truly staggering. What makes that possible is the incredibly talented staffs that work tirelessly around the region at Service field stations and in the regional office. This too invigorates me and gets me excited about doing my part to help advance the Service mission. As Friends, you are our grassroots support, an extension of the Service family. You help keep the Refuge System and the Service strong. Thanks for what you do and I look forward to working with you in the days ahead.

## April 9 -11, 2010 - Regional Friends Group Conference

The conference is quickly approaching and promises to be an outstanding networking and learning opportunity. Please don't delay in returning your registration packet. Remember the registration fee and lodging costs for each of the two representatives you choose to send will be covered. These representatives will also be eligible for a travel reimbursement stipend of up to \$150 per individual to cover any additional expenses associated with traveling to and from the conference including airfare, parking, mileage, or cab fare.

**Friends Groups:** All Friends Groups members have to do is complete the registration packet (separate form for each registrant) and submit it to The Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex no later than **Saturday, February 20**. Please **DO NOT** call the hotel to reserve your room. A representative from The Friends of the Chassahowitzka NWR Complex will take care of making your hotel reservation. Please remember there is priority registration for two "official representatives" from each Friends Group to attend the conference. If each Friends Group doesn't send their two "official representatives" there may be space available if you would like to send more than two members. Additional spots will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

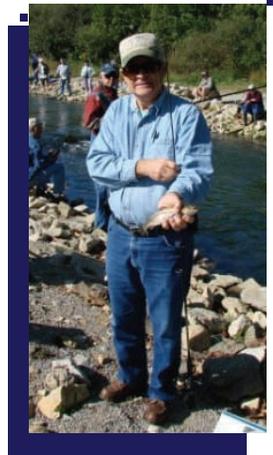
Please [click here](#) if you would like to download a registration packet. If you have any additional questions please contact [Stacy Armitage](#) (404/679-7178).

## Fisheries News -

### Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Continues Catching Smiles and Reaching for Rainbows with Fall Fishing Derbies

*Article and photo submitted by Amanda Patrick, USFWS*

With plenty of smiling faces and blue skies abounding, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Friends, staff and volunteers enjoyed two great days of fishing fun as the team organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Catch a Smile Senior Fishing Derby and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reaching for Rainbows Special Kids Fishing Derby. Held on Tuesday and Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, the events provided two days of trout-tastic fishing fun for those 62 and older, along with students from local Russell and Clinton County School Districts with permanent mental and/or physical disabilities, as crew members from Wolf Creek, along with support and help from the Friends of Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Inc and several community businesses/organizations and volunteers, worked to plan and organize the two days of fall fishing fun.



With a well-stocked creek full of jumping trout, all in attendance had a chance to try their hand at catching their limit. All attendees were also treated to lunch. After lunch, all seniors on hand enjoyed a chance at winning one of many door prizes generously provided by community sponsors while those students participating were awarded medallions and t-shirts. Overall, 90 seniors attended the Catch a Smile Senior Fishing Derby and 57 children were a part of the Reaching for Rainbows Special Kids Fishing Derby. In addition to these smiling faces, 53 staff and volunteers helped to make both days true successes! Yet without the gracious support of over 32 sponsors donating an estimated \$3,731.81 (either cash or items), neither event would have been possible, thus making these two fall fishing events proud examples of the benefits of partnering together to make a difference. Through such teamwork and an overall spirit of volunteerism and partnership, the events occurred with little or no cost to any one agency as well.

### Friends Group Bids Farewell

No Friends group can work without the support of the hatchery manager, and Ken Boyles has without a doubt done just that. Not only has he been a great ambassador for the USFWS during his years of service, he has been an outstanding supporter of Friends of the Norfolk National Fish Hatchery (FNNFH) in every conceivable way. Our Friends group would not be what it is today without Ken's support.

That's why it was with great regret that Ken announced his retirement at the Friends general board meeting this past November—not that Ken does not deserve to do so after 30 years of service with the USFWS.



The Friends unanimously decided to host a retirement party for Ken, and what an event it was. It was attended by Fisheries ARD Linda Kelsey, retired USFWS personal, the hatchery staff, officials from the Corps of Engineers, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, members of the FNNFH and personal friends and family of Ken and his wife Audrey. Presentations and gifts were given in appreciation of both Ken's service and friendship.

## Refuge News -

### The SEWEE Association Worked Hard to Achieve a Dream

*Submitted by Karen Beshears, President, SEWEE Association*

A plaque hangs in the new Waccamaw Environmental Education Center that says "This facility is the fulfillment of a dream to create a place where visitors young and old can come and learn more about the natural wonders of Waccamaw National Wildlife Refuge". The Center is now that place -- a place where students of all ages come to study about freshwater wetlands, invasive and endangered species, and the impact man has on nature today as well as in the past. It is also a place where the community comes to meet, to learn, or to just sit in the rocking chairs on the porch and survey the Pee Dee River.



The facility truly is the fulfillment of that dream which began soon after the Refuge was formed in 1997. The first manager of Waccamaw, Craig Sasser, envisioned lots of students coming to the refuge and learning about the forests and the rivers that it encompasses. Craig grew up in this area and wanted to make sure that other children had the chance to explore nature, learn to hunt and fish, and learn to appreciate the incredible natural areas along the banks of the Pee Dee and Waccamaw Rivers in northeastern South Carolina.

Craig came to Cape Romain's Sewee Visitor & Environmental Education Center to see the educational programs of the SEWEE Association and came away convinced that this is what he wanted at Waccamaw. SEWEE became the Friend's Group for Waccamaw in 2003 and the educational programs began that fall with 2 schools closest to the refuge in Georgetown County. Since then, the **Waccamaw Earth Stewards** program, a multi-week educational partnership that focuses on freshwater wetlands, has flourished and grown to 5 schools and one residential facility for boys.

SEWEE has worked with Craig over the past 3 years to create this new place to house the refuge headquarters and the environmental education programs. We found funding to assure that the wet lab/classroom would be built when building costs overran the funding allocated by Congress due to unforeseen costs from the archaeological digs on the building site. The Yauhannah Bluff area is a historically important area as one of the main crossing sites of the Pee Dee River, and these digs found artifacts from early settlers and native tribes of South Carolina. These artifacts have now been incorporated into the exhibit area of the facility through a Preserve America grant obtained by SEWEE and the information has become one of the program offerings to schools.

The Association also worked with several local funding organizations, including the Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation and the Spaulding/Paolozzi Foundation to secure grants for audio/visual needs, taxidermy, trails, and for all the supplies needed for the classroom and our programs. We even have added rocking chairs to the riverside porch so visitors can sit and enjoy the peace of the view.

Our classroom is state-of-the-art with a SmartBoard, computer and mounted projector, which allows us to use technology similar to that in the schools for the interactive programs at the Center. We have microscopes and binoculars for every student, as well as materials like crayons, paints, papers, etc., needed in our various programs. A trail that was partially constructed by students allows us to teach about environmental stewardship, as recycled materials and pervious concrete were used to create it. We also help teachers learn how to incorporate the natural world into their lessons through professional development workshops.

In all, the Association has contributed nearly \$200,000 into the development of this facility and continues as the refuge partner to expand the use of the educational component there. We look forward to sharing this place with the visitors to the refuge and the community and believe it will become a focal point for educational education in this region.

### "Tip of the Quarter"

**Communication is key! The Regional Office is updating the Southeast Region's Friends Group Contact List.**

**Please email [Stacy Armitage](#) the following information:**

- 1. FG Name, 2. President's Name, 3. FG Email Address,**
- 4. Stations Supported, 5. FG Mailing Address, 6. FG Phone #, and**
- 7. Refuge/Hatchery Liaison**

## Friends Group Events

- The long-anticipated [Savannah NWR](#) Visitor Center and Nature Store will open to the public on Monday, March 8, 2010. The public opening will be preceded by an invitation-only Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting on Saturday, March 6th. This will be an all-day event with refreshments, speakers, exhibits, video presentations, nature tours, and an opportunity to visit the exhibit hall and our nature store, *The Gator Hole*.
- **Full Moon Guided Canoe Trip** - Saturday, January 30 and Sunday, February 28 from 6:40 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Enjoy a guided moonlight canoe tour through a portion of the [Loxahatchee NWR](#) interior. RESERVATIONS REQUIRED - Please call 561-733-0192.

## FWS Events

- February 19, 2010, Wolf Creek NFH: **Biologist-in-Training Facilitator Training**, Contact: [Amanda Patrick](#) for more information. **\*\*MUST pre-register**
- May19-21, 2010, NCTC: **OUT8113 - Developing and Working with Friends Organizations**, Registration deadline: March 10, 2010, Contact: Laura Jones, Education Outreach, (304) 876-7499, [Laura Jones](#)



## Join the Friends for the 2010 Refuge Friends "Fly In" and Hill Rally!

On Tuesday, March 9th, 2010, National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and Friends are heading to Capitol Hill! Friends successfully rallied on the Hill earlier this year to secure a \$40 million increase for the Refuge System!

The NWRA urges you to send at least one representative from your Friends group to join others from around the nation on March 9th, culminating with a reception on Capitol Hill that evening.

Friends will arrive March 8th in time for a short advocacy training session in late afternoon. Differing from past years, there will not be a National Friends Conference in 2010; so they are asking you to come to Washington for the sole purpose of communicating the needs of your refuge and the Refuge System to Congress.

Be sure to budget for transportation, food and lodging. NWRA is working to find a block of reasonably priced hotel rooms in the area for the nights of the 8th and 9th and will have hotel information to you shortly. So that NWRA can better estimate your needs, please let Joan know as soon as possible who from your organization will be attending – or at least that you are trying to attend.

For more information about the Friends Fly - In contact [Joan Patterson](#) Director of Grassroots Outreach (202-292-2422).

[www.eeweek.org](http://www.eeweek.org)

### National Environmental Education Week -- April 11-17, 2010

National Environmental Education Week (EE Week) is the largest organized environmental education event in the United States. EE Week increases the educational impact of Earth Day by creating a full week of environmentally-themed lessons and activities. [Sign up now](#) to help spread the word about the importance of EE and to receive FREE promotional items.

