



Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society
Personnel Changes

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society has lost the two employees that have been managing its business, and their replacements have been hired and are being trained. Abbey Reibel, who has served as visitor center manager, volunteer coordinator, and environmental educator for kindergarten students, resigned in August. Adam Fauth, who has been handling reservations for the red wolf howlings, black bear programs, canoe tours, and Wings over Water, has accepted a permanent, full-time position with the Red Wolf Recovery Program.

The visitor center manager duties have been separated from the volunteer coordinator duties. CWRS has hired Tracey Rock as the refuge volunteer coordinator. She will coordinate all volunteers at the Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges: volunteers from the local community, resident volunteers, and college interns.

Tracey is a Registered Nurse with 16 years combined experience as a Hospice and Home Health Nurse, Patient Advocate, Nurse Manager, Quality Assurance Officer and Clinical Case Manager and Director of the Patient Advocate Foundation North Carolina office.

Tracey graduated in 1996 from Rappahannock Community College in Virginia. In 2001, she trained through the Medical College of Virginia Hospital and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health Care System as an End of Life Nurse educator. In 2002, Tracey attended the Nurse Leadership Academy offered by Bon Secours Health System and trained as a facilitator for the

Service Excellence program conducting classes on ways to improve service quality.

Tracey has worked with Hospice Volunteers and has also been a volunteer herself for hospice, as well as for the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and the Dare County Community Care Clinic.

Tracey resides in Manteo with her husband Howard. They have two daughters, Hillary and Corey.

People interested in volunteering may contact Tracey at 252-473-1131, extension 227 or tracey_rock@fws.gov. Tracey's office is located at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center in Manteo.



CWRS Volunteer Coordinator Tracey Rock

CWRS has hired Susie Kowlok as the visitor center manager. She will coordinate and train the volunteers at the two visitor centers at Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges and manage the gift shops.

Susie has had 30 years of progressively responsible experience as a sailor in the United States Navy, a

civilian employee with the United States Army and Navy, and a production administrator in private industry.

She lives in Manteo with husband John and son Rhett. She has two grown children and two grandchildren.



CWRS Visitor Center Manager Susie Kowlok

CWRS has hired Steve Brumfield as the Wings over Water Coordinator and Administrative Assistant at the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. He will be taking reservations for Wings over Water this fall and red wolf howling events and canoe tours in the summer and tram tours year round.

For nearly 27 years, Steve was both the manager and owner of Manteo Booksellers in downtown Manteo. He sold hundreds of nature handbooks, field guides, and histories of the immediate area and region to his clients, many of whom were wildlife refuge enthusiasts as birders, photographers, kayakers, bikers and general nature lovers.

For the last year, after Manteo Booksellers was closed due to being flooded out by Hurricane Irene, Steve has stayed busy with two major jobs. For 5 months, he worked as an office volunteer in the battered women's shelter of the Manteo branch of Outer Banks Hotline. For the past 6 months, he worked as a Park Ranger for the National Park

Service, Cape Hatteras Seashore, at the Oregon Inlet Campground.

He has an aunt living on Roanoke Island, and a daughter, son-in-law and two grandchildren living outside of Elizabeth City.



CWRS Wings over Water Coordinator and Administrative Assistant Steve Brumfield
(Tracey Rock Photo)

The Pea Island Staff Has Moved

Because Hurricane Irene destroyed the buildings at Pea Island, Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley has relocated to a trailer at the Hatteras National Seashore maintenance area in South Nags Head in March and will move to an office that is being renovated by the National Park Service near the Bodie Island Lighthouse north of Oregon Inlet in January of 2013. The new volunteer coordinator Tracey Rock and visitor center manager Susie Kowlok are stationed in the new refuge headquarters building in Manteo.

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is a non-profit organization established and incorporated in 1989 by a group of local citizens to provide support for Alligator River, Pea Island, and other national wildlife refuges in eastern North Carolina.

The Society has three purposes: generate funds to support programs and activities, assist in the recruitment of volunteers, and provide a voice for the members of the Society at a local, state, and national level.

More information about the Society is on its web site at: <http://www.coastalwildliferefuge.com/>

Wildfest

Wildfest, an environmental education event oriented toward second grade students, will occur on Wednesday, October 24 from 9AM until 2PM at the Wright Brothers National Memorial. The large Wright Brothers Pavilion at the Memorial provides a great location for environmental agencies and organizations to teach participants about the conservation of natural resources. More than five hundred attendees participated in 2011.

For information about Wildfest, contact Cindy Heffley at 252-475-4180 or Cindy_Heffley@fws.gov or go to <http://www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/spec.html>



North Carolina State Park Rangers Exhibiting Animals at Wildfest (Tracey Rock Photo)

Wings over Water

The Wings over Water Festival will be held from November 6-11, 2012 on the national wildlife refuges and other locations throughout northeastern North Carolina. The event attracts more than 900 participants to the 90 activities featured over the six-day event.

The Festival features birding and paddling tours, trips to historic attractions and area refuges and parks, geocaching, and presentations on climate change and nature photography,

Several different paddling trips are planned and include the Kitty Hawk Bay Sunset Kayak Tour that

allows participants to enjoy a classic Carolina sunset over the bay while navigating through tall cord grass fields and listening for the mysterious sounds of the night marsh.

Award-winning photographer, author, and biologist John Sill will deliver the presentation at this year's keynote dinner on Saturday, November 10 at the North Carolina Aquarium in Manteo. His art has been exhibited in highly acclaimed shows and appeared in a number of books and magazines. He was the illustrator for the Bird Identification Calendar published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society from 1980 until 2007.

For information about the Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival, call 252-216-9464 or go to www.wingsoverwater.org.

Red Wolf Recovery Program

The red wolf recovery program staff estimates that there are between 100 and 120 red wolves in the Red Wolf Recovery Area (1.7 million acres in five counties in northeastern North Carolina). There were 75 known red wolves in the area at the end of the June, 2012. The population includes 15 wolf packs (comprised of 51 wolves and 13 breeding pairs), and 8 mixed packs (comprised of 8 wolves and 8 coyotes). Another 16 wolves are not known to be associated with a pack. A total of 52 sterile coyotes were monitored in the area.

The Red Wolf Recovery Program documented nine red wolf litters (comprised of 40 pups) born in the Red Wolf Recovery Area during the 2012 whelping season. Additional pups and/or litters could be present, but have not been confirmed. Two pups born in captivity at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge were fostered into a wild litter. Pups born during the 2012 whelping season are not included in the reported population numbers.

2012 Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society Officers

President: Stanley Oliver
Vice President: Joyce Bornfriend
Secretary: Martha Howell
Treasurer: Warren Davis

Directors: Gail Dreis, Ann Groves, Tracey Rock, Bob Glennon

Portable Photo Blind Available for Use

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society has had a portable photo blind constructed and made it available for use on the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.

It has been placed on the Alligator River Wildlife Refuge for public use to quietly and safely observe and photograph wildlife, undisturbed in their natural habitat. The blind can be placed in one of several pre-determined locations throughout the refuge taking full advantage of the seasonal changes and best viewing locations throughout the year.

The blind is free and available for public use unless it is reserved for private use. To reserve or enquire about scheduled reservations please call or visit the Tracey Rock at the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center in Manteo; 252-473-1131 X 227.

The cost of reserving the blind is \$10 per hour (per family/group). To reserve use of the blind in its current location on the refuge requires a 24 hour notice. Movement of the blind to another approved location will require a 48 hour notice and an additional \$10 moving fee.

This blind is intended for viewing purposes and not for hunting. Baiting of wildlife is strictly prohibited. PLEASE do not bring into the blind.

For further questions please call Tracey Rock at 252-473-1131, extension 227 or email her at Tracey.Rock@fws.gov.



CWRS Volunteer Coordinator Tracey Rock and Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley in Front of the New Portable Photo Blind (USFWS Photo)



Orange Coneflower, (*Rudbeckia fulgida*) a Perennial Relative of Black-Eyed Susan at the Gateway Visitor Center (Tracey Rock Photo)

National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center

Now Open

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center (official name: Coastal North Carolina National Wildlife Refuges Gateway Visitor Center) in Manteo opened on June 30. The title 'Gateway' announces the center's function as the entry portal to northeastern North Carolina's and southeastern Virginia's eleven national wildlife refuges and national fish hatchery from the Outer Banks. The facility describes the purposes, habitats, and activities on all of the refuges and the hatchery. The center has exhibits in bird migration, red wolves, prescribed fire, water management, and climate change.

The visitor center requires a cadre of volunteers as dedicated as the volunteers who staff the facility at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge seven days a week. The large exhibit area and auditorium in the Gateway Center poses an opportunity for local residents interested in helping visitors learn about the refuges, their habitats, and wildlife. The Center also has a gift shop. People interested in volunteering may contact Tracey Rock at 252-473-1131, extension 227 or Tracey.Rock@fws.gov.

Staff Profile – Cari Cook

Cari Cook came to the refuges in August from the Great Dismal Swamp, where she spent 10 months as a visitor services intern. Prior to interning with the Refuge System, she spent seven summers working as a camp counselor in Northern Minnesota, where she developed a passion for working with children and adults in the outdoors. She graduated in 2011 from the University of North Carolina with a degree in English. So far, her favorite part of working at Pea Island and Alligator River is leading the canoe tours, and she's especially excited to get the chance to work with school groups later this fall. Cari will be with us until mid-December.



New Geocache Program Ready to Begin!

Geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt that is now being modified for refuges. Traditional geocaching consists of hiding and seeking a physical cache: coins, logbook and more. The cache location is pinpointed using GPS technology and shared on a Web site such as geocaching.com for others to find.

Burying, placing or removing a physical cache is prohibited on refuges, because sensitive natural or cultural resources could be damaged.



This Cropland geocache post is just one of fourteen located throughout the 152,000 acre refuge. (USFWS Photo)

Many refuges are getting on the geocache bandwagon by using travel bugs and geocoins. Travel bugs are stuffed animals. Each is equipped with a trackable dog tag called a Travel Bug. The tag allows a person to track where the tiny stuffed birds travel. Each Travel Bug bird and Blue Goose Geocoin has a mission to travel to a National Wildlife Refuge in every state

We're doing something completely different here at Alligator River and soon at Pea Island and other refuges in Northeast North Carolina. Habitat geocache posts are stationed throughout the refuge. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache posts at that location. Once they find the post, they will answer the question on the report sheet. They will then open the top of the post and use the attached embosser to "collect" an embossed image of the habitat type in the corresponding box on their report sheet. Participants completing at least 12 of the 14 stations can visit the Pea Island or Coastal Wildlife Refuges visitor center to receive a refuge pin.

More information will soon be posted on the refuge website.



Cindy Heffley and Interns Cody Stone and Cari Cook (photographer) install the final geocache post.

Thank You, Volunteers

Volunteers continue to make a significant contribution to the workings of Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges. Volunteers from the local community staff the visitor center at Pea Island and maintain the refuge's visibility seven days a week. Resident volunteers staff the visitor center, perform maintenance on the refuges, and assist with education and interpretation programs. College interns rotate through the biology, interpretation, and maintenance program areas from May through November. They perform biological surveys, conduct programs for the public, maintain the buildings and grounds, and assist at special events such as Wings over Water and Wildfest.

Environmental Education Programs

Visitor Services Specialist Cindy Heffley conducts programs at local schools and on the refuges for visiting schools. Volunteers from the community and college interns assist them with the programs. Transportation grants provided by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society help bring many students to the refuges that might not otherwise be able to visit.

Cindy brings lessons to Dare County's middle school-aged children in Junior Naturalists Clubs at Manteo and First Flight Middle Schools, and Cape Hatteras Secondary School. This winter, Intern Cari Cook will be teaching kindergarten students in

wildlife clubs at elementary schools in Manteo, Kitty Hawk, and Nags Head.

Cindy can always use more volunteers to assist her. In the fall, she will be forming an after-school middle-school club and pre-school program at the new visitor center. Interested parties in contact Cindy at 252-475-4180 or Cindy_Heffley@fws.gov.

Fall Program Schedule

The Fish and Wildlife Service has set the program schedule for the fall of 2012. The staff has posted the schedule at:

<http://www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/Images/InterpretivePrograms.pdf>

Bird walks will be conducted at the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge in October and November on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday and in December on Friday and Sunday. There will not be bird walks on November 8, 9, and 11 because there will be bird walks during the Wings over Water Festival. The walks will occur in the morning from 8:00 to 9:30.

Staff and volunteers will lead Alligator River tram tours on Saturday, October 13 and Saturday, December 8 from 9AM until noon. The tram tours will depart from the Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot at the intersection of Milltail Road and U.S. Route 64. To guarantee a seat, registration is required and the cost for adults is \$7.00 per person; there is no charge for children. Walk-ons are welcome, at no charge, is space allows.

Red Wolf Howlings will take place on Saturday, October 13 at 6PM for Wolf Awareness Week, Saturday, October 27 at 6PM for Howl-O-Ween, and Saturday, December 8 at 4PM for the Holiday Howl. The Howlings will depart from the Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot at the intersection of Milltail Road and U.S. Route 64.

No reservations or registration is required for fall bird walks or howling programs.

Biology Report

(Contributed by Refuge Biologist Dennis Stewart)

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge- Turtle nesting season is still underway as all nests have not hatched yet. The season will not be over until late October or early November. There were 30 nests this year - the second highest number since 1994, when there were 42 nests. Approximately 23 of the nests this year have hatched, and the hatch rates for individual nests have been as high as 100%.

Shorebird nesting on the refuge was less successful than previous years due primarily to overwash events from minor to moderate northeasters. One piping plover chick fledged. Terns and American oystercatchers produced small numbers of fledglings compared to previous years.

A contract has been let for construction of the replacement bridge over Oregon Inlet, and work is scheduled to begin in early 2013. Construction of the replacement bridge over New Inlet bridge is likely to begin in late 2012 or early 2013.

Construction activity for the North Pond Dike Repair Project is in progress. The permits expire at the end of October and there will likely be further delays in the repairs if construction is not finished before permits expire.

There will be no dredging in Oregon Inlet with sand bypassing to the Refuge beach this fall. If the Corps of Engineers dredges the inlet, it will be conducted by sidecast or hopper dredges.

Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge- Crop production in the farm units appears to be very good. The overall corn production looks good, and the soybean crops are very healthy. There was a lot of food produced for a variety of wildlife species during the year, and there should be a lot of residual food when portions of the crop land are flooded for migratory waterfowl later in the fall and winter.

The U.S. Highway 64 Wildlife Crossings Study funded by North Carolina Department of Transportation was completed, and the final reports concluded that at least six major wildlife crossings are necessary for safer passage of motorists along the highway and safer passage of wildlife from one side of the highway to the other. Although the

research focused on the black bear and red wolf, numerous other wildlife species will benefit from these crossing structures. The crossings are just as important for motorist safety as they are for the wildlife. Today's smaller vehicles and 300-400 pound bears are not a good combination at speeds of 55 mph or more.

As the tracking collars fall off the bears, refuge staff assists with their recovery. The barbed wire along the guard rail is scheduled to be removed this fall.

The North Carolina State University is gearing up to resume data collection from the carbon flux tower in a swamp forest on the refuge.

Tram Tours

The Refuge purchased an open air tram in 2010 with which to conduct tours of the refuges.

From June through August, staff and volunteers lead Alligator River tram tours on Tuesday mornings from 8:30 to 10:30. This summer 120 visitors participated in the tours.

From September through May, Cindy Heffley leads the tram tour on the second Saturday of the month from 9AM until noon. The theme for the October 13 tour is National Wildlife Refuge Week. There will not be a Saturday tram tour in November because there will be tram tours during Wings over Water festival.

To guarantee a seat, reservations are required. There is a \$7.00 charge for adults; there is no charge for children. Call 252-475-4180 to make reservations.

The tours depart from the Creef Cut Trail parking lot at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge on U.S. Route 64.

Climate Change Project

The Nature Conservancy's Climate Change Adaptation Project on the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge continues along eastern shoreline of the refuge between Manns Harbor and Stumpy Point.

This summer, The Nature Conservancy continued to work on restoring the hydrology of drained wetlands impacted by the effects of saltwater intrusion. With the three ditch plugs already in place, TNC installed two more ditch plugs in marsh drainage ditches to encourage sheet flow of storm water, increasing water quality in Pamlico Sound, and prevent saltwater intrusion into the pocosin. Two more ditch plugs will be installed this year, restoring the hydrology of wetlands along 11 miles of shoreline.

This summer we also had two Climate Adaptation Interns assisting with activities such as water quality monitoring, water flow, changes in water quality, soil accretion and subsidence, shoreline erosion rates, estuarine fauna species richness, and seedling growth and survival after restoration. The interns compiled and organized data into a GIS database which will be instrumental for mapping and data synthesis.

Brian Boutin decided to leave TNC and accepted a position with the South Florida Water Management District as Lead Environmental Scientist. This is an exciting opportunity for Brian and his family, and we wish him well. TNC is currently conducting interviews for the next Climate Adaptation project director and has already received resumes from impressive candidates. We look forward to continuing this project and expanding it into the future.

The results of the project will guide efforts in other areas of the coast to mitigate the effects of climate change. Information on the project can be found by going to The Nature Conservancy's web site at www.nature.org and following the links to the North Carolina Chapter home page.

Volunteers for any and all aspects of our projects are always needed. Interested parties should contact Kate Murray at kmurray@tnc.org.

Fire Program Report

(Contributed by Kelley VanDruten and Tom Crews)

The fire staff was able to spray approximately 290 acres of common reed (*Phragmites australis*) south of Stumpy Point and east of US 264 in September. The common reed was within the perimeter of the Pains Bay fire and was funded through the Pains Bay Fire Burned Area Rehabilitation Plan.

A reconnaissance flight over the fire earlier this summer had showed that there was much more common reed than the staff had previously estimated. The staff has submitted an amendment to the plan so that they will be able to spray more common reed in the next two years.

In July, Kelley VanDruten examined the low pocosin plant community on US Highway 264 with Dr. Mike Schafale of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. The '264 low pocosin' is a Significant Natural Heritage Area with a variety of unique plants typical of organic soils more than 45 inches deep. The low pocosin seems to be recovering well although a change in species response is expected over the next few years.

The staff conducted a prescribed burn at the Cedar Island National Wildlife Refuge in March of 2012. They burned 2301 acres in a high complexity, very difficult burn behind homes and businesses in the Atlantic, North Carolina Community and around the multi-million dollar air field target range equipment sites at the United States Marine Corps Cherry Point Air Station Atlantic Field Outlying Landing Field.

This project was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mattamuskeet Refuge Complex, the United States Marine Corps Cherry Point Air Station Forestry group and gunnery range, the Atlantic Volunteer Fire Department, and the North Carolina Forest Service.

The burn released one of the few longleaf pine sites on poorly-drained soils in North Carolina from hardwood competition, restored wildlife habitat on the refuge, and removed hazardous fuels from around the homes and United States Marine Corps facilities.

The Alligator River fire staff purchased one new flextrack tractor and ordered a second new flextrack tractor capable of pulling fire plows across the deep organic soils typical of the area.