



Friends and Volunteers

Annual Update FY 2009



Volunteers, Friends and partners are valuable allies of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These individuals and groups are vital to fulfilling the Service's mission and goals. Each year, they give generously their time, expertise and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System, the National Fish Hatchery System, the Migratory Bird Program, the Office of Law Enforcement, the Endangered Species Program, Ecological Services and the National Conservation Training Center. They play an important role in serving the more than 42 million visitors who enjoy public lands managed by the Service.

During Fiscal Year 2009 (October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009), 42,918 volunteers donated 1,611,388 hours. The value of their labor was \$32,630,607, the equivalent of 775 full-time employees. More than 200 Friends organizations support the work of the Service.

There is no better way to show the value of our volunteers than to share their successes. Along with volunteer achievements and special initiatives focused on volunteers, this report describes some of the innovative programs our Friends organizations are undertaking. It also highlights projects involving partners such as Take Pride in America, National Public Lands Day and the Student Conservation Association.

Volunteers

What Authorizes the Service to Accept Volunteers?

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1988 authorize the Service to accept volunteer services. Congress reauthorized the Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act in 2004, affirming its desire to involve Americans as stewards of our nation's natural resources and wildlife. As a result, the National Wildlife Refuge System expanded its volunteer program, and environmental education programs, recreational opportunities and community-based partnerships increased.

How Do You Find Out About Volunteer Opportunities?

Volunteer positions with the Service are posted at www.volunteer.gov/gov. You may also contact the field office where you would like to volunteer; the volunteer coordinator in the region where you are interested in volunteering or the national headquarters. For more information about the Service's volunteer program, visit www.fws.gov/volunteers, or call 800/344 WILD. A complete list of our national and regional offices is at the end of this report.

Who Are Our Volunteers?

Our volunteers are people who want to give back to their communities and are interested in the work of a refuge, hatchery or Service program. They are parents who want to model environmental stewardship, retirees willing to share a wealth of knowledge and experience, outdoor enthusiasts wishing to spread the word about America's great natural treasures and concerned citizens of all ages interested in making meaningful contributions while learning about conservation. Whether it is an environmental ethic, a love of bird watching or enthusiasm for the outdoors, like-minded volunteers gather to share their passions while contributing to the good of their communities.

What Do Our Volunteers Do?

Volunteers perform a variety of tasks. Some work full-time; others give a few hours a week or month; and still others help during special events.

We match our volunteers' talents and interests to work to be done, which varies from site to site. Whenever possible, we put special skills and experience to work to achieve our conservation goals.

Volunteers conduct fish and wildlife population surveys, band birds, lead tours and educational activities for school groups and other visitors, do laboratory research, manage cultural resources, perform administrative duties, work

with computers and other technical equipment, maintain Service facilities, write grant proposals and much more. Many volunteer projects use groups of people in "work parties." These events are as social as they are productive. Friendships are formed while important work is done.

How Do We Calculate the Value of Our Volunteers?

Although volunteers' skills, knowledge, and time are priceless, the Service uses the figure calculated annually by Independent Sector, the leadership forum for charities, foundations and corporate giving programs, to put a monetary value on volunteer contributions. For FY 09, an hour of volunteer time was worth \$20.25.

Volunteers complete tasks that would otherwise go undone. The Service uses a full-time equivalent, or the hours worked by a full-time employee in a year, to figure the number of staff positions filled by volunteers. A full-time equivalent equals 2,080 hours.



Volunteer Contributions Service-wide in FY 09 (October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009)

Number of Volunteers	42,918
Hours Donated	1,611,388
Value of Volunteer Service	\$32,630,607
Full-time Equivalents	775

Volunteer Contributions for Each of the Last 10 Years

Fiscal Year	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Hourly Value	Value of Volunteer Service
2000	35,684	1,332,875	\$15.68	\$20,899,480
2001	36,006	1,462,599	\$16.27	\$23,796,485
2002	39,534	1,352,952	\$16.74	\$22,648,416
2003	44,126	1,628,550	\$17.19	\$27,994,774
2004	37,958	1,532,123	\$17.55	\$26,888,758
2005	37,996	1,478,797	\$17.55	\$26,677,497
2006	36,169	1,447,421	\$18.04	\$27,168,092
2007	37,881	1,491,152	\$18.77	\$29,092,375
2008	39,765	1,557,764	\$19.51	\$30,391,975
2009	42,918	1,611,388	\$20.25	\$32,630,607

Volunteer Contributions by Service Program in FY 09

Program	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value of Volunteer Service	Full-time Equivalents
Refuges	37,960	1,392,062	\$28,189,255	669
Fisheries	4,402	138,743	\$2,809,546	67
Other *	556	80,583	\$1,631,806	39
Total	42,918	1,611,388	\$32,630,607	775

* includes Endangered Species, Law Enforcement, Migratory Birds, Ecological Services field offices and National Conservation Training Center

Volunteer Contributions by Service Region in FY 09

Region	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value of Volunteer Service	Full-time Equivalents
1 (Pacific)	7,309	201,732	\$4,085,073	97
2 (Southwest)	4,378	273,983	\$5,548,156	132
3 (Midwest)	8,148	201,161	\$4,073,510	97
4 (Southeast)	9,105	360,096	\$7,291,944	173
5 (Northeast)	6,323	259,611	\$5,257,123	125
6 (Mountain-Prairie)	2,716	118,032	\$2,390,148	57
7 (Alaska)	476	64,721	\$1,310,600	31
8 (Pacific Southwest)	4,367	109,603	\$2,219,461	53
9 (Headquarters)	96	22,449	\$454,592	11
Total	42,918	1,611,388	\$32,630,607	775

Volunteer Contributions for Refuges by Service Region in FY 09

Region	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value of Volunteer Service	Full-time Equivalents
1 (Pacific)	6,134	177,156	\$3,587,409	85
2 (Southwest)	4,111	223,405	\$4,523,951	108
3 (Midwest)	7,603	187,480	\$3,796,470	90
4 (Southeast)	7,774	322,684	\$6,534,351	155
5 (Northeast)	5,695	222,912	\$4,513,968	107
6 (Mountain-Prairie)	2,106	86,475	\$1,751,119	42
7 (Alaska)	414	56,265	\$1,139,366	27
8 (Pacific Southwest)	4,105	106,612	\$2,158,893	51
9 (Headquarters)	18	9,073	183,728	4
Total	37,960	1,392,062	\$28,189,255	669

Volunteer Contributions for Fisheries by Service Region in FY 09

Region	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value of Volunteer Service	Full-time Equivalents
1 (Pacific)	1,155	21,658	\$438,574	10
2 (Southwest)	206	17,309	\$350,507	8
3 (Midwest)	534	12,982	\$262,885	6
4 (Southeast)	1,267	31,319	\$634,210	15
5 (Northeast)	359	22,220	\$449,955	11
6 (Mountain-Prairie)	588	29,037	\$587,999	14
7 (Alaska)	31	1,227	\$24,847	<1
8 (Pacific Southwest)	262	2,991	\$60,568	1
9 (Headquarters)	0	0	\$0	0
Total	4,402	138,743	\$2,809,546	67

Volunteer Contributions for Other Programs* by Service Region in FY 09

Region	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value of Volunteer Service	Full-time Equivalents
1 (Pacific)	20	2,918	\$59,089	1
2 (Southwest)	61	33,269	\$673,697	16
3 (Midwest)	11	699	\$14,155	<1
4 (Southeast)	64	6,093	\$123,383	3
5 (Northeast)	269	14,479	\$293,200	7
6 (Mountain-Prairie)	22	2,520	\$51,030	1
7 (Alaska)	31	7,229	\$146,387	3
8 (Pacific Southwest)	0	0	\$0	<1
9 (Headquarters)	78	13,376	\$270,864	6
Total	556	80,583	\$1,631,806	39

* includes Endangered Species, Law Enforcement, Migratory Birds, Ecological Services field offices and National Conservation Training Center

Volunteer Contributions by Activity by Service Region in FY 09

Region	Wildlife & Habitat	Maintenance	Environmental Education	Recreation	Cultural Resources	Other	Total Hours
1 (Pacific)	66,618	26,883	30,656	52,846	9,099	15,630	201,732
2 (Southwest)	107,549	64,108	28,450	53,407	3,975	16,494	273,983
3 (Midwest)	71,935	36,670	18,378	51,039	4,723	18,416	201,161
4 (Southeast)	91,188	84,603	47,971	98,828	2,277	35,229	360,096
5 (Northeast)	85,162	47,177	24,302	73,483	1,133	28,354	259,611
6 (Mountain-Prairie)	36,587	28,986	10,610	21,748	10,608	9,493	118,032
7 (Alaska)	30,542	6,642	8,596	15,667	942	2,332	64,721
8 (Pacific Southwest)	64,381	9,619	15,866	12,842	1,771	5,124	109,603
9 (Headquarters)	4,829	0	1,081	356	500	15,683	22,449
Total	558,791	304,688	185,910	380,216	35,028	146,755	1,611,388

Volunteer Contributions by Activity by Service Program in FY 09

Program	Wildlife & Habitat	Maintenance	Environmental Education	Recreation	Cultural Resources	Other	Total Hours
Refuges	467,560	271,630	156,940	359,829	20,992	115,111	1,392,062
Fisheries	36,623	29,512	25,320	19,216	12,660	15,412	138,743
Other*	54,608	3,546	3,650	1,171	1,376	16,232	80,583
Total	558,791	304,688	185,910	380,216	35,028	146,755	1,611,388

* includes Endangered Species, Law Enforcement, Migratory Birds, Ecological Services field offices and National Conservation Training Center



Zeeger de Wilde, National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer of the Year, tends one of the butterfly gardens he created.

Volunteer of the Year:

National Wildlife Refuge System 2010 Volunteer of the Year -- Zeeger de Wilde (Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, MD)

The National Wildlife Refuge System Awards, sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, honor outstanding accomplishments by refuge managers, Refuge System employees, volunteers and Friends groups.

This award was established to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of volunteers. Each year volunteers make up a critical work force that contributes over 1.5 million hours to the operation and management of the Refuge System.

Zeeger de Wilde received the Volunteer of the Year Award for his unwavering support and commitment to national wildlife refuges. While he has visited more than 200 refuges, and volunteered at many, he has made the greatest commitment to Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex, driving more than two hours each way from his home in Delaware to volunteer.

Zeeger has volunteered more than 12,000 hours on refuges over the last 20 years, doing jobs as varied as trapping and monitoring endangered Delmarva fox squirrels, planting trees and restoring habitat. He has applied his experience in horticulture and arboriculture to projects large and small, from simple landscaping to habitat restoration. Zeeger has left a

legacy in the butterfly gardens he created that showcase native plants.

In addition to his dedication to conservation and habitat restoration, Zeeger has a passion for teaching others about nature. An accomplished birder, he leads popular bird walks, or “eagle prowls,” giving many visitors a high-quality wildlife experience. He is fluent in four languages (Dutch, German, French and English) and has a talent for engaging visitors from halfway around the world. He is an impressive advocate and ambassador for national wildlife refuges everywhere.

Highlights for the National Wildlife Refuge System:

Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge (NV) benefits from full-time, residential volunteers who do year-round maintenance (mowing more than 800 acres of weeds, loading gravel, removing tree stumps, trimming trees, maintaining the watering system, cleaning the shop, servicing small engines and installing a heating/cooling system), administration, campground hosting, visitor services, native planting and computer assistance. In FY 09 alone, one volunteer collected Global Positioning System data for 12 miles of boundary fence line and data on springs to use in a northern leopard frog habitat restoration project.

At Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (CA), eighteen volunteers provided more than 1,500 hours of condor nest monitoring. Another thirteen volunteers logged more than 6,600 hours repairing a trail to a condor nest observation point and doing general maintenance.

Families flocked to **Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)** in support of National TV Turn-off Week in April. More than 90 participants brought picnic baskets and enjoyed family dinners in the refuge’s picnic grove. Refuge volunteers led eager participants on nature walks and returned as the sun set for a campfire sing-along -- the perfect way to end the evening!



Children participate in a campfire sing-along to “Songs of the System” during a National TV Turn-off Week event at Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)



A hard-working volunteer repairs a trail at Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge (CA).



Volunteers from the Nevada Multiple Agency Site Stewards program haul materials to restore a cabin on Desert National Wildlife Refuge (NV).

Volunteers from the Nevada Multiple Agency Site Stewards program spent a week restoring Hidden Forest Cabin at **Desert National Wildlife Refuge (NV)**. Work included rolling, lifting and carrying logs; building and installing a wrought-iron stove box base; trimming branches; surveying archaeological resources; mapping and excavating and restoring the foundation. Boy Scouts used pack horses to bring in supplies and take out trash. They also did light maintenance, restoration and bat surveys.

Highlights for the National Fish Hatchery System:

To help the **Upper Columbia Fish & Wildlife Office (WA)**, students in the Geographic Information Systems program at Eastern Washington University used GIS to map the distribution of trust and endangered species and assess effects of projects on species and habitats. Volunteers also helped with endangered species consultations and information technology management.

Seventeen volunteers from the Alternative Sentencing Program of Delta County gave 895 hours of community service to **Hotchkiss National Fish Hatchery (CO)**, helping with fish culture maintenance. In addition, one RV couple did 152 hours of grounds and fish culture maintenance and organized this year's kids' fishing derby.

The **Central New England Fishery Resources Office (NH)** enlisted 31

volunteers who did a myriad of jobs. These dedicated volunteers helped with aquatic resource field surveys, fish population stock assessments, fish capture and transport, data analysis and summary reporting and age and growth studies.

Highlights of Other Programs:

Volunteers at the **National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (OR)** did research in genetics and chemistry, prepared study specimens for the comparative collection, worked with computer applications and maintained the station's website.

One long-time volunteer in the Bird Unit cleans and curates all bird skeletons, updates the Bird Collection database and keeps the freezer inventory current. Another volunteer scans and measures all feathers and prepares images for uploading to the Feather Atlas. This is highly detailed work requiring much knowledge and skill. In FY 09, the Feather Atlas received more than 1.6 million hits, and 33 new species and 163 new scans were added.

Several volunteers in the **Alaska Region Office of Migratory Bird Management (AK)** did a shorebird breeding ecology study in Barrow, fitted American golden-plovers with geolocators in Nome, and did genetic analyses in the US Geological Services Molecular Ecology Laboratory.



Charlie Governali, a volunteer with the Alaska Region Office of Migratory Bird Management, measuring egg volume. .

Volunteers continued to help staff at the **Ohio Ecological Services Field Office (OH)** monitor rare plants. Given the short field season and limited staff, these volunteers are extremely valuable for visiting multiple sites within a short period of time. One volunteer with extensive orchid experience pollinated isolated eastern prairie fringed orchid plants, while another supplemented staff at many local events, including Earth Day celebrations.

Volunteers at the **Caribbean Ecological Services Office (PR)** helped with recovery efforts for Federally endangered species such as Puerto Rican parrot, Puerto Rican crested toad, Wheeler's peperomia (plant) and the cactus *Leptocereus grantianus*. They did surveys, propagation, monitoring and planting to improve the species' conservation status.



A volunteer at the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (OR) reads feathers for uploading into the feather atlas.

In the **Mountain-Prairie Region Office of Budget and Administration (CO)** volunteers encrypted 150 laptops, saving valuable work hours for the information technology management department. The volunteers also updated the operating system on all new laptops and developed a clone software to create an image representing the region on every laptop.

Invasive Species and Volunteers Initiative:

Engaging volunteers in the fight against invasive species is an integral part of the National Wildlife Refuge System's management approach. A Congressional appropriation to the Service increased citizen participation in refuge operations while promoting early detection of non-native species on refuge lands.

Volunteers are at the forefront of the fight against invasive plants on refuges. They map invasive plants using Global Positioning System units, enter data into computers, pull invasives, release insects for biological control of invasives, educate the public and restore native habitat. Without volunteers, a great deal of work with invasive plants would go undone.

Three volunteer instructors from the academic and private sectors brought knowledge and experience with specialized equipment to the Invasive Plant Management Course presented by the **National Conservation Training Center (WV)**. Their participation in the course supports the development of successful invasive plant management programs on National Wildlife Refuge System lands.



Caribbean Ecological Services Office (PR) Volunteer Alondra Diaz helps a student plant a native tree in his schoolyard.



Volunteer instructor Jennifer Vollmer demonstrates invasiv plant control equipment during the National Conservation Training Center's Field Techniques for Invasive Plant Management course at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, HI.



Volunteer Global Positioning System training at the National Bison Range (MT) (photo: Mandy Tu, The Nature Conservancy)

Friends Organizations

What Are Friends Organizations?

Friends are private, independent, community-based, nonprofit organizations formed primarily by citizen volunteers who support the mission and purposes of a national wildlife refuge or other Service office. There are more than 200 Service Friends groups, with about 10 new organizations created each year. Some support single refuges or hatcheries, while others are connected to a refuge complex or an entire state.

What Do Friends Do?

Friends organizations are crucial to the National Wildlife Refuge System's mission of conserving and protecting the wildlife of this great nation. From its start in 1903, the Refuge System has owed its very existence to concerned citizens eager to protect America's natural resources. Friends help millions of Americans understand that their actions today determine the legacy we leave for tomorrow – and they are inspiring a new generation of conservationists.

These important allies assist their field stations by educating local communities and elected officials, encouraging community participation in programs and building long-term support. They raise funds and offer volunteer staff to do work that might otherwise go undone. They help with education programs and special events.

Friends are an essential link to the community to promote land stewardship. They give time, skills and resources for wildlife conservation.

How Can You Learn More About Friends Organizations?

To find refuges with Friends organizations, go to www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/find.html and click on a state, or contact the Division of Refuges Refuge Support Group Coordinator at 703/358 2392.

Friends Group of the Year -- Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges (AK)

The National Wildlife Refuge System Awards, sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, honor outstanding accomplishments by refuge managers, Refuge System employees, volunteers and Friends groups.

This award recognizes a Friends group that has shown outstanding leadership as a voice of the community and as an advocate for the protection, conservation and enhancement of local refuges and the National Wildlife Refuge System overall.

Alaska is home to some of our largest and wildest national wildlife refuges. Some, such as the magnificent Arctic Refuge, are larger than several states in the Continental U.S. combined. Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges has taken on the colossal task of advocating and promoting the conservation of Alaska's refuges and proven itself a remarkable organization.

The Friends have undertaken an impressive array of projects throughout Alaska. They have volunteered at remote science camps hosted by the Service and staffed booths at festivals such as the Ocean Festival held in June in Anchorage. The Friends are effective in everything from educating local communities and national decision-makers on the importance of Alaska's refuges to fighting invasive species.

The Friends have removed invasive plants along remote stretches of the Dalton Highway and promoted the control of rats and other invasive mammals. They have taken action to reduce the number of feral horses in the Alaska Maritime Refuge. In the decade since their introduction on the island of Unalaska, the small herd had doubled and was destroying the sensitive riparian habitat. Using funding from a Service invasive species grant, Friends volunteers flew to Unalaska -- about 800 miles west of Anchorage -- to traverse the rugged Aleutian terrain and neuter or "geld" five of the wild stallions to slow the growing population.

In addition to many programs in and around Alaska refuges, the Friends traveled to Washington, DC, to testify on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge System before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies during public witness days in 2007 and 2009. They played a critical role in the fight against the proposed land exchange and road through designated wilderness at Izembek Refuge by providing testimony against the project before the House Natural Resources Committee in 2007 and partnering with the National Wildlife Refuge Association to publish the "Road to Nowhere" report that outlines the Izembek issue.



Members of the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges pull invasive plants along the Dalton Highway. (photo: Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges)

National “Friends Unite!” Conference

Friends organizations from across the country gathered in Washington, DC, in February for the largest-ever national Friends conference. Nearly 300 people representing 230 national wildlife refuges, 161 Friends organizations and 49 states joined about 200 representatives from the Service and speakers at the conference. Sessions focused on topics such as climate change, citizen science programs and the business of Friends. Sponsored by the Service and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, the conference featured nearly two dozen training sessions and special forums.

Other Friends Organization Accomplishments

Friends of Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NJ) raised money to stabilize and repair an old barn that supports a large colony of bats on the refuge. Before restoration began, the bats were captured by wrapping the barn in plastic and funneling them into traps as they left the building. Volunteers put each bat in a bag to be banded and released. Initial repairs were completed in time for an estimated 1,200 bats to return in the spring.

Employees from Cogentrix Energy, Inc., which donated \$10,000 to the project, helped wrap the barn. Volunteers sewed 200 cotton bat collection bags. Volunteers came from the refuge Friends, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Conserve Wildlife Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, local consulting firms and William Patterson University.

When The Food Network sought a location for an episode of their Burger Nation series, the City of Socorro (NM), the Chamber of Commerce and **Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge** saw an innovative way to promote eco-tourism — use the spectacular refuge landscape as a setting rather than a destination. At the Network’s request, the Friends of Bosque National Wildlife Refuge (NM) worked with the Chamber of Commerce to hold a Chile Festival, with regional chile product vendors and local musicians. More than 100 festival goers arrived mid-morning while crews filmed, the band played and burgers sizzled. The refuge and community were in the limelight for a whole new audience.



Food Network star Bobby Flay visits with Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (NM) store manager Shirleen Greenwood during filming at the refuge.

Employees from Cogentrix Energy, Inc., wrap an old barn on Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (NJ) in plastic to trap bats before repair work begins.



Partners

Refuge managers work beyond the boundaries of their units much more than in the past. Because of personnel and funding constraints, agencies increasingly rely on volunteers and cooperating organizations to complete projects. Partnerships with states, other Federal agencies, non-profit organizations and citizen-conservation groups have become increasingly important for addressing off-refuge threats to on-refuge goals and objectives. Examples of cooperative efforts include conservation communications, training, hunter education, natural resources scholarships, conferences and youth programs.

National Wildlife Refuge Association

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) is the only national nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving American wildlife through the invigoration, strengthening and expansion of the National Wildlife Refuge System. NWRA focuses its work in three areas: public policy advocacy, grassroots education and outreach, and innovative “Beyond the Boundaries” programs that strive to create mosaics of conserved lands around national wildlife refuges.

NWRA partnered with the Service to gather more than 500 supporters of wildlife, Friends of wildlife refuges and professional refuge staff at the National “Friends Unite!” Conference. Immediately following the conference, NWRA staff led more than 200 engaged citizens to voice their support for wildlife conservation and wildlife refuges on Capitol Hill.

National Environmental Education Foundation

National Public Lands Day, sponsored by the National Environmental Education Foundation, is the nation’s largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. Designed as a “work day,” volunteers give back to the resource through project work, while learning about their public lands.

Since the first National Public Lands Day, 74 projects have occurred on 38 Fish and Wildlife Service field stations. In September 2009, volunteers worked on national wildlife refuges throughout the country.

Kern National Wildlife Refuge (CA) volunteers helped staff get ready for the waterfowl hunt season by setting up hunting blinds and weeding around pumps, the hunter check station and water control structures. They also put up a split rail fence and built a rock pathway.

At Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge (MN), volunteers staked pine trees and installed tree tubes to protect them from feeding deer. The trees will restore conifer habitat to an area that had been logged.

At Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (GA), volunteers helped restore a 1920s swamp homestead, and local Cub Scout Troop 360 did trail maintenance.



A member of Cub Scout Troop 360 clears trail at Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge (GA).

American Hiking Society

American Hiking Society's Volunteer Vacations are a series of trail stewardship projects in exciting and diverse locations around the country. Each crew consists of between six and 15 volunteers accompanied by a leader. Trips involve backpacking or day hiking, and accommodations range from primitive camp sites to bunk houses or cabins.

Volunteers at **Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge (ME)** maintained 10-15 miles of wilderness and other refuge trails by cutting back vegetation and blown-down trees and installing directional and interpretive signage.

At **Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge (NJ)**, volunteers upgraded the 1/4-mile Akers Woodland Trail to make it universally accessible by removing the top six inches of sandy loam and replacing it with crushed stone.

Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (WV), volunteers completed the refuge's first completely accessible hiking trail by building a raised walkway and interpretive route along a beautiful section of wetland forest.

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is the leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. In 2009, the Nature Conservancy's Delaware Chapter partnered with the Service's Delaware Bay Estuary Project to restore 33 acres of upland forest and 15 acres of non-tidal wetland habitat within TNC's Milford Neck Preserve in Kent County, Delaware.

Take Pride in America

Take Pride in America (Take Pride) is a national partnership set up by the Department of the Interior to inspire Americans to volunteer in caring for their public lands. Take Pride's goal is to instill in every citizen an active sense of ownership and responsibility for natural, cultural and historic resources and to support and recognize the effort of those who volunteer on public lands.

Take Pride recognizes and honors outstanding volunteers at its annual national awards ceremony. Individuals, groups, organizations, programs and Federal land managers are honored for their contributions to our public lands and innovative use of volunteers. In support of President Obama and Secretary Salazar's call to service, Take Pride is leading the U.S. Department of Interior's United We Serve initiative.

In 2009, Scott Glup, project leader at **Litchfield Wetland Management District (MN)**, was named Federal Land Manager of the Year by Take Pride. Scott was recognized for his work with local Boy Scout groups enhancing native habitat on Service Waterfowl Production Areas. The local troop contributed over 200 hours of service removing buckthorn and other undesirable trees. By working with the scouts, Scott fostered a spirit of public lands stewardship among youths.



Volunteers construct a raised walkway on a universally accessible hiking trail at Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge (WV).

Youth in Natural Resources Initiative

Studies find that the average American child spends four minutes per day playing outside and almost eight hours watching electronic entertainment media. To combat this, Secretary Salazar has pledged to connect youth to the great outdoors through education and employment opportunities with the Department of the Interior.

A proposed funding increase for the Youth in Natural Resources Initiative will allow agencies such as the Service to engage youth in environmental education, recreation and service programs on public lands and pique their interest in careers in public service. This effort will increase employment among young people, bring diversity and contemporary skills to the Service and address the burgeoning backlog of refuge maintenance.

In 2007, the **Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society (NC)**, supporting Alligator River, Pea Island and other national wildlife refuges in eastern North Carolina, piloted a Junior Refuge Friends program at First Flight Middle School in Kill Devil Hills, NC. By 2009, the program had blossomed into an area-wide initiative to involve middle school students with North Carolina coastal refuges. Students at four area schools have the opportunity to witness and experience the wilds of eastern North Carolina, thanks to a partnership among the Society, the refuges, and schools.



Students from First Flight Middle School participate in the Junior Refuge Friends program co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society (NC)

Student Conservation Association

The Service has partnered with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) for more than 20 years, offering students an opportunity to volunteer in their field of study and gain valuable work experience. It is a perfect union -- the Service has a range of important work to be done, from environmental education and interpretation to habitat monitoring and data collection, and SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders by engaging young



Student Conservation Association Intern Allyssa Gabriel (right) assesses recycling potential at a hangar in Fairbanks, AK, with Service Employee Joanna Fox.

people in hands-on service to the land. This year, 227 SCA members logged more than 150,000 hours at 83 national wildlife refuges, resulting in critical conservation services worth more than \$3 million.

Through its Conservation Intern Program, SCA recruits college students from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds to work with Service employees for periods of 12 to 52 weeks. For summer projects, they form Conservation Crews of high school students from across the nation and experienced leaders. Both programs introduce young adults to the wide range of work and responsibilities of a career in natural resources.

In 2009, SCA Intern Allyssa Gabriel served as greening coordinator for the **Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges (AK)**. She was charged with expanding recycling

efforts at all three refuges, producing education materials about responsible use and consumption and working with the greater Fairbanks community to boost recycling. With a passion for sustainability, the Kennesaw State University (GA) graduate dove into her work. In the program's first month, more than 1,100 pounds of materials were recycled. (Note: Allyssa has since joined the Service as an employee.)

Non-native plants threaten ecosystems throughout the U.S., and the problem is particularly serious across the landscape of the American Southwest. If the Service posted an FBI-style list of public enemies, salt cedar would certainly rank among the Most Wanted. SCA deployed invasive plant eradication teams at **Cibola (AZ), Imperial (AZ) and Sevilleta (NM) national wildlife refuges** in 2009. SCA members pulled, cut and sprayed tens of thousands of invasive plants while learning about the region's rich environment and culture and educating local residents about the supportive role they can play.

Almost every summer weekend in 2009 at **Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge (VA)**, SCA Volunteer Sandra Jones, a biochemistry major, organized and delivered formal interpretive programs about threatened loggerhead sea turtles. She focused her programs on the turtles' lifecycle and migratory and nesting patterns and on the refuge's monitoring and protection program.

SCA Intern Sarah Dewees, a wildlife management major, helped staff at **Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge (FL)** make a stand against the invasive Burmese python. The python population in the Everglades alone is estimated at 30,000. Sarah trapped and surveyed pythons across a large area of the refuge and was featured on ABC's World News. She also served as community liaison, providing python education and outreach and promoting a "snake spotter" hotline in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy.

SCA Volunteer Renee Martin studied Wyoming toads at Dexter National Fish Hatchery (NM), testing the biopsy punch as a way to collect tissue samples from the webbing of a toad's hind foot. The biopsy punch is thought to cause minimal harm while collecting DNA from an amphibian. She also participated in the quagga mussel testing that is ongoing at the hatchery.

4-H

The Michigan State University 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp was awarded the 2009 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Connecting Youth with Nature through Natural Resources Conservation Education Award. The camp combines quality youth development opportunities with hands-on natural resources and conservation learning experiences.

Twenty students from the national 4-H GIS Leadership Team and Equipo GIS, the team's international division, put their experience to work for the [San Diego National Wildlife Refuge Complex](#) (CA). The students, from across the United States, Puerto Rico and Mexico, used geographic information systems to locate, record and map resources ranging from historic structures to a population of the Federally endangered salt marsh bird's-beak plant. The event took place in conjunction with a series of user conferences sponsored by ESRI, a California-based GIS technology firm.

In 2009, the state-of-the-art, 24-bed Interagency Volunteer Center was built near **St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge (FL)**. The U.S. Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service split the \$300,000 project cost. While not a volunteer activity, the center supports the Service's volunteer program by housing young adult crews from the National Scenic Trail Association's Alternative Spring Break, the Student Conservation Association and Volunteer Vacation. It also serves as firefighter housing during fire emergencies.

Service Employee Catherine Sykes and Student Conservation Association Volunteer Renee Martin remove quagga mussel larvae from fish transport tanks at Dexter National Fish Hatchery (NM).

Curious campers gain hands-on experience at the 4-H Great Lakes and Natural Resources Camp.



Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America Scenic Trails Council held its Spring Camporee on the grounds of **Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (MI)** during the first weekend in May. With the support of Jordan River staff, the hatchery grounds were transformed into a 116-acre campground. More than 200 Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, representing 10 troops from northwest Michigan, participated in the event.



Jordan River National Fish Hatchery (MI) Manager Roger Gordon accepts an award from the Boy Scouts Scenic Trails Council, a thank you for hosting the 2009 Camporee.

While on site, the scouts earned badges and completed service projects, including the repair and re-construction of a gravel and timber drip edge along the early-life-stage rearing building. The scouts also participated in forestry and fishery seminars and built more than 30 bird nesting boxes, which they placed on the hatchery grounds.



4-H students use geographic information systems to record the location of a survey marker on the Sweetwater Marsh Unit of the San Diego Bay National Wildlife Refuge (CA).

National Elk Refuge (WY) volunteer Betty Mulcahy hands a bighorn sheep skull to a young passerby during Elkfest in Jackson, WY



Each year, on the Saturday before Memorial Day weekend, tons of elka antlers collected from the **National Elk Refuge (WY)** go up for public auction on Jackson's Town Square. The auction is run in partnership with the Jackson District Boy Scouts, who provide hundreds of hours of volunteer support collecting and preparing the antlers for sale. It is now one of a weekend of events collectively known as Elkfest, celebrating nature, outdoor skills, and environmental education. As part of this year's celebration, the National Elk Refuge held two, free, family-oriented educational activities.

At Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery (SC), Boy Scouts from Camp Ho Non Wah bagged oyster shell for estuarine habitat construction on Wadmalaw Island.



Scouts bag oyster shell at Bears Bluff National Fish Hatchery (SC).



Girl Scouts participate in a "Fish and Mud Critters" activity at Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge (FL).

Girl Scouts of the USA

Linking Girls to the Land (LGTTL) is a partnership between Girl Scouts of the USA's Elliott Wildlife Values Project and Federal natural resource agencies, initiatives and partnering organizations. LGTTL builds girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. More than 35,000 girls work with Federal natural resource agencies each year to develop leadership skills through girl-led, learning-by-doing and cooperative-learning activities.

In March, **Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (IA)** celebrated the birthday of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the establishment of the Girl Scouts. Local scouts explored the wonders of the prairie, learning about its diversity of plants and animals. They transplanted more than 500 plants in the refuge's greenhouse, acting as stewards of the prairie.

Inspired by the Governor of Florida, local Girl Scouts participated in the "Serve to Preserve Program" at **Lower Suwannee and Cedar Keys national wildlife refuges (FL)**, learning about a 6,000-year-old archaeological site.

National Outdoor Leadership School

Students and instructors from the National Outdoor Leadership School-Outdoor Educator's Course teamed up with **Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (AZ)** volunteers to restore the Antares Mine Building and maintain the historic buildings at the Rob Roy Mine on the refuge.



Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge (IA) Visitor Services Specialist Hallie Rasmussen demonstrates transplanting to Girl Scouts in the refuge greenhouse.



Volunteers from the National Outdoor Leadership School take a day off from their backpacking trip across Kofa National Wildlife Refuge (AZ) to repaint some of the historic buildings at the Rob Roy Mine in January. (photo: Randy Mickel)

Volunteer Contacts

Region 1 - Pacific Region (Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
911 NE 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503/872 2700

Region 2 - Southwest Region (Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 1306
Albuquerque, NM 87103-1306
505/248 6635

Region 3 - Midwest Region (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
One Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056
612/713 5167

Region 4 - Southeast Region (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands, South Carolina and Tennessee)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Blvd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30345
Volunteers: 404/679 7170
Friends: 404/679 7356

Region 5 - Northeast Region (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia and West Virginia)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9587
413/253 8200

Region 6 - Mountain-Prairie Region (Colorado, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Denver Federal Center
P.O. Box 25486
Volunteers: 303/236 4392
Friends: 303/236 4395

Region 7 - Alaska Region

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503
907/786 3391

Region 8 - Pacific-Southwest Region (California, Nevada and Klamath Basin)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way W-2606
Sacramento, CA 95825
916/414 6464

Region 9 - Headquarters

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuge System
4401 N. Fairfax Ave., Room 670
Arlington, VA 22203
Volunteers: 703/358 2386
Friends: 703/358 2392

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>
800/344 WILD

June 2010

