

IR3

Inside Region 3

January 13, 2005

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

*Another Year of Service to the
People and Wildlife of America*



Inside This Issue:

Cranes Complete Migration

An Eagle's Story

Looking Good For The New Year

After 64-Day Migration, Whooping Cranes and Ultralights Reach Florida

Thirteen endangered whooping cranes and their surrogate parents—three ultralight aircraft—reached Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge on Dec. 12 after a 64-day trek through seven states.

“Though hurricanes damaged more than 90 percent of the fencing around the pen, staff, refuge volunteers and volunteers from other agencies and refuges all came together to repair the damage,” said Chassahowitzka NWR Manager Jim Kraus. “Everyone did a stellar job and we thank them for their contribution to this reintroduction effort.”

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), an international coalition of public and private organizations, is conducting this ultralight-led reintroduction project in an effort to return this highly imperiled species to its historic range in eastern North America.

Fourteen cranes left Necedah, Wis., on Oct. 10, following ultralight aircraft flown by Operation Migration, Inc., pilots. International Crane Foundation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists will monitor their winter behavior and track them on their anticipated spring migration north in 2005.

A day before reaching Chassahowitzka NWR, one of the young birds, number 6, was euthanized after falling ill with what was later determined to be Eastern equine encephalitis.

These birds are the fourth generation of whooping cranes to make this unique assisted migration from Wisconsin to Florida. Cranes from the ultralight-led migration classes of 2001, 2002 and 2003 are making

or have completed their own unassisted southward migrations, representing another milestone in this historic reintroduction effort. With the success of this fall’s migration, there are now 49 whooping cranes in the wild in eastern North America.

The whooping crane chicks that take part in the reintroduction project are hatched at the U.S. Geological Survey’s Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md. There, the young cranes are introduced to ultralight aircraft and raised in isolation from humans. To ensure the impressive cranes remain wild, project biologists and pilots adhere to a strict no-talking rule, broadcast recorded crane calls and wear costumes designed to mask the human form whenever they are around the cranes.

New classes of cranes are transported to Necedah NWR each June to begin a summer of conditioning behind the ultralights to prepare them for their fall migration. Pilots lead the birds on gradually longer training flights at the refuge throughout the summer until the young cranes are deemed ready to follow the aircraft along the migration route.

Graduated classes of whoopers spend much of their time during the summer on or near the Necedah and Horicon national wildlife refuges, both of which are in central Wisconsin. They also use



- Operation Migration Photo

The whooping cranes and their ultralight guide make the final landing of the southward migration on December 12.

state and private lands. It is not unusual for yearling female cranes to wander, especially if they are not associating with any male flockmates, which typically select the future breeding territory.

Project staff from the International Crane Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service track and monitor southbound cranes in an effort to learn as much as possible about their unassisted journeys and the habitat choices they make along the way.

Whooping cranes were on the verge of extinction in the 1940s. Today, there are only about 275 birds in the wild. Aside from the Wisconsin-Florida birds, the only other migrating population of whooping cranes nests at the Wood Buffalo National Park in the Northwest Territories of Canada and winters at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge on the Texas Gulf Coast. A non-migrating flock of approximately 100 birds lives year-round in the central Florida Kissimmee region.

For more information on the project, visit the WCEP website at <http://www.bringbackthecranes.org> Rachel F. Levin, *External Affairs*

Service Examines New Methods to Control Canada Thistle

The Service is hoping to add an innovative weapon to its arsenal used to battle Canada thistle, an invasive weed and long-time thorn in the side of federal land managers. Region 3 has joined forces with the U.S. Geological Survey's Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center to study seed planting techniques that could minimize the noxious weed in tallgrass prairie restoration projects on National Wildlife Refuge System lands.

The Region's refuges and wetland management districts have an active habitat restoration program and annually seed thousands of acres in the upper Midwest to native plant species. In Fiscal Year 2003, the Region restored 26,690 wetland acres and 7,394 upland acres, primarily in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Over the next year, the Service will be testing various prairie seed mixtures on three sites in Minnesota and one in Iowa to determine if certain mixtures can reduce or eliminate Canada thistle from restored areas.

"The goal of the research is to compare the ability of differing seed mixes and application techniques to suppress Canada thistle establishment in new restorations," said Tim Yager, ecosystem biologist for the National Wildlife Refuge System at Ft. Snelling, Minn. "We hypothesize that by increasing

competition and decreasing the disturbance inherent in seeding, we can produce more weed-resistant restorations."

Canada thistle plagues prairie restorations, forcing the Service to control the weed by applying pesticides or mowing, control measures that are detrimental to the restoration effort and expensive. Prairie grass seedlings are disturbed during early growing stages, weakening the native seedlings as much or more than it does Canada thistle. "Continued control of Canada thistle may perpetuate the repeated disturbances that favor infestation by a variety of exotic plants, thistle included," Yager said.

The study will be conducted at Neal Smith NWR in central Iowa, Fergus Falls WMD in western Minnesota, Morris WMD in western Minnesota and Litchfield WMD in central Minnesota.

Canada thistle is a native of southeastern Eurasia. It was introduced to Canada as a contaminant of crop seed as early as the late 18th century and has since spread across the United States. It is a rooted perennial that grows to three to four feet tall with spiny dark green leaves. The weed's flower top ranges in color from rose-purple to pink to white. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

Milwaukee Man Pleads Guilty to Using His Car to Kill Gulls

Federal and state law enforcement authorities are crediting concerned citizens with the conviction in federal court on Nov. 23 of a 31 year-old Milwaukee man who purposefully drove his car through a flock of ring-necked gulls in order to kill or injure the birds.

Ronnie S. Jones, Jr., of Milwaukee, pleaded guilty to violating the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Jones was sentenced to time served in jail of 49 days, and placed on supervised release for one year.

Jones admitted that on July 29, 2004, he intentionally drove his car through a flock of ring-billed gulls in the parking lot of a shopping center. Ten gulls were killed or injured. One gull was rehabilitated by the Wisconsin Humane Society and released back to the wild.

The incident was investigated by special agents of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Conservation Wardens. "We're very grateful to the people who witnessed this crime and were concerned enough to call in and report it," said Service Special Agent Ed Spoon "Without public support we simply cannot do our jobs."

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects all migratory birds, including shore birds such as gulls, songbirds, hawks, owls, eagles, and ducks and geese. The penalty for killing protected migratory birds includes a fine of up to \$15,000 and imprisonment of up to six months. *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*

About the cover:

Fishery Biologist Nate Caswell from the Carterville Fishery Resources Office operates an electrofishing system on Crab Orchard Lake during the annual recreational fishery survey.

- USFWS Photo



Bison Wounded by Arrow at Neal Smith NWR

A refuge bison roaming the 750-acre bison and elk enclosure on Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, was struck by an arrow during the holiday season. Biological Technician Jeff Krueger discovered the injured animal during his daily inspection on Dec. 28. The arrow seemed to be deeply embedded in the animal, extending out directly perpendicular to the mid-section of the body. The animal continued to graze and walk the prairie, wary of Krueger's presence, but not in any obvious distress. The animal's blood stained hide indicated the wound was fairly fresh.

Krueger relayed the news to Refuge Manager Nancy Gilbertson, who, after inspection, dispatched Mike Rich and Scott Ford to follow-up and document the incident. Gilbertson also contacted Dr. Dennis Rierdon, a large animal veterinarian at the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines. Dr. Rierdon examined the bison at the refuge, anesthetized the animal, removed the arrow and cleaned the wound.

The arrow, which had penetrated the body of the bison approximately six inches, miraculously hit no vital organs. The injured bison is expected to make a full recovery.



The arrow removed had a broadhead tip.

- USFWS Photo by Scott Ford

Neal Smith NWR Biological Technician Jeff Krueger discovered this bison with a large arrow sticking out of its side on Dec. 28. A veterinarian was able to successfully remove the arrow and the bison is expected to recover. An investigation of the incident is currently underway.

Reports of the shooting spread quickly and many individuals and organizations called to express their concern and offer support. The Defenders of Wildlife, the Humane Society, the Iowa Bow Hunters Association, the Friends of the Prairie Learning Center and a local resident have offered money for

a reward, totaling \$4,300, for information on the incident.

Refuge Law Enforcement Officer John Below is investigating the incident with assistance from Iowa State DNR Officer John Mertz. *Scott Ford, Neal Smith NWR*

Hail & Farewell

Region 3 is a dynamic organization. Quality employees are continuously coming to the region or leaving for new challenges.

Each month, we will do our best to publish a list of new employees, as well as those who have retired. Names are provided by the Regional Human Resources Office.

This month, we welcome the following new permanent employees: **Kathy L. Besser**, Regional Office, Human Resources; **Kelly R. Hill**, Regional Office, Human Resources; **Alicia Perkins**, Regional Office, Human Resources.

We also welcome the following new term, temporary and student employees: **Katherine E. Brashear**, Necedah NWR; **Dustin R. Balson**, Horicon NWR; and, **Ted H. Eggerbraaten**, Green Bay FRO.

There are no retirees to report this month.

See More Service Accomplishments and Submit Your Own by Logging On To the Accomplishment Reporting System (ARS) at <http://ars.fws.gov>

Have a Photo or View You Would Like to Share?

Send your photos to Chuck Traxler in the External Affairs Office. Phone: 612-713-5313 or email: charles_traxler@fws.gov

Fur, Fins and Feathers (and Flowers)

Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid Pollinators Identified in Iowa and Illinois

The eastern prairie fringed orchid can grow over four feet tall and produce up to 40 white flowers on each stalk. The plant was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 1989 as a result of habitat loss and collection due to its beauty. In 1993, the Service began coordinating recovery efforts for the orchid with local chapters of The Nature Conservancy. TNC mobilized and trained their Volunteer Stewardship Network to assist Service staff, and staff from other partner agencies, with collecting data on the health and demography of individual plants in northeast Illinois. In addition, the volunteers began hand-pollination of the plants. Between 1993 and 2003, a total of 7,438 plants were counted (some individuals in multiple years) and 1,721 plants (23 percent) were hand-pollinated during the same period.

It has been a long-held belief that the natural pollinators of this orchid were lacking -- hence the hand-pollination. In 2004 the Service initiated a study of pollinator species that visited the orchid at five locations in northeast Illinois and one location in eastern Iowa.

The thought was that if pollinators were identified, we could determine larval host plants and then

inventory plant species at the orchid sites to determine to what degree these larval plants are present. Increasing orchid pollinator larval plants may increase the numbers of orchid pollinators at the sites and in turn increase the chances of natural pollination of the orchids.

The primary goals of this study were to: (1) identify nocturnal moth species seen flying in the vicinity of the orchid, and (2) confirm species that pollinate or visit/nectar at individual plants.

Pollinator activity was monitored by visually observing orchids and illuminated white sheets (one illuminated by a mercury vapor light, the other by a black light) at each site. A total of 19 nights were spent observing and collecting. A typical night consisted of arriving about 5 pm, taking nectar measurements, setting up the equipment and then visually observing and collecting from about 8 pm to 4:30 am.

Insects attracted to the site were either captured for later identification, or identified in the field, checked for pollinia, and then released. Positive identification of a pollinator can be made using this method if orchid pollinia are found on the insects' proboscis.

Based on the study, one species of hawkmoth -- the hermit sphinx -- was identified as a pollinator. Host plants of the hermit sphinx include bee-balm, bugleweed, mints and sage.

Although this study confirmed only one species of hawkmoth in Illinois and Iowa as a pollinator of the orchid, theoretically any species of hawkmoth with a proboscis long enough to reach the nectar in the orchid's nectar spur could be an orchid pollinator. However,



- Photo by Ron Panzer

This hawkmoth was captured in Iowa and positively identified as an orchid pollinator.

more data must be collected and analyzed to answer this question.

All studies to date (including our preliminary data) have identified a total of three species of orchid pollinators in five states.

Our preliminary data indicate the frequency of pollinator visits to individual plants is low, and this appears to be the case even in populations of the orchid with high individual densities. Low frequency of visits by pollinators could indicate their populations are low, and contribute to low pollination. Or, it could indicate that populations of the orchid are too low in individual numbers and cannot compete with other flowering plants in the area.

A resulting question is whether relatively few individual pollinators can effectively visit and disperse pollen between/among sizable populations of the orchid. Clearly, more study is needed.

Hopefully the study can be repeated again this summer to add to the information of eastern prairie fringed orchid pollinators.

The eastern prairie fringed orchid may be removed from the Endangered Species List when 22 highly viable populations are distributed across plant communities and physiographic regions within the historic range of the species. Cathy Pollack, Chicago FO



- USFWS Photo by Cathy Pollack

Biologist spent long nights on observation decks (comfy chairs) in fields of orchids collecting insects.

A Missouri Eagle's Unlikely Road to Fame

The journey began on a blustery April afternoon in 1995, as two employees of the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge found themselves engaged in an unlikely rescue mission amid a bottomland forest on the Upper Mississippi River. A young bald eagle, barely four weeks old is lying helplessly in shallow water at the base of her nest tree. Her two siblings lay dead nearby amid the tangled debris of their fallen nest.

After trekking through woods and water more than a mile from the refuge office, Refuge Operations Specialist Beatrix Treiterer (now at Stone Lakes NWR) and Maintenance Mechanic Alan Lagemann anxiously approach the scene, lift the eaglet out of the water and return to their truck. Once there they head south toward the World Bird Sanctuary, a rehabilitation and education center in suburban St. Louis. More than once on the hour long trip they thought the young eagle had finally succumb, but each time it took another shallow breath and kept up the fight.

At the sanctuary, experienced hands joined the struggle to save the eagle's life. The first few days

held little hope that she would survive. But, as each day passed, the young eagle began to improve. At first her breathing improved. Then, she grew a little stronger each day, and finally – an appetite! Over the next several weeks the young eagle recovered. She was eventually named “Patriot” after the St. Louis Post-Dispatch published a story about her, and sponsored a name the eagle contest.

By the time Patriot regained complete health, it was too late in the nesting season to place her back in another nest or enter her into a hacking program (used to help train birds for release back in to the wild). Reluctantly, the decision was made that she would not be returned to the wild but would remain at the bird sanctuary to become an educational bird; an ambassador for eagles. Since then, Patriot has matured into a beautiful adult eagle and is one of the sanctuary's most traveled and important educational birds. She has been seen by tens of thousands of people at the sanctuary and all over the Midwest at schools, special events and many other gatherings.

Since her rescue and rehabilita-



- USFWS photo by Scott Flaherty

Patriot and her caretaker appear at a NWRs Centennial event in Hannibal, Mo., July 2003.

tion, staff members at Clarence Cannon NWR have continued to affectionately follow Patriot's “career.” Last year, we were excited to have her return to the refuge for a public event celebrating the Centennial of the National Wildlife Refuge System. In October, Patriot continued to help spread the spirit of America and conservation when she appeared with an honor guard in front of 60,000 people during baseball's National League Championship Series at Busch Stadium. *Dave Ellis, Clarence Cannon NWR*

Chicago Field Office Studies Effects of Human Disturbance on Night Herons

The Chicago Field Office is partnering with the USDA Forest Service and California State University at Long Beach to conduct a human disturbance study on black-crowned night herons. As part of the study, biologists spent long days wading in chest-high water to set-up cameras and run video cables across a small marsh just south of Chicago. Staff then moved about the marsh in a canoe and played various noises, such as voices or music, at different decibel levels. The cameras recorded the reaction of

the birds and helped analyze key behavioral characteristics such as detection distance, flight initiation distance, escape distance and latency period.

The overall goal of the study is to create a simple model that can be used by managers to design habitat management strategies that can help strike a better balance between human activities and wildlife habitat.

The study will continue next year and incorporate measuring cortisone levels in the birds as a stress indicator. *Chivia Horton, Chicago FO*

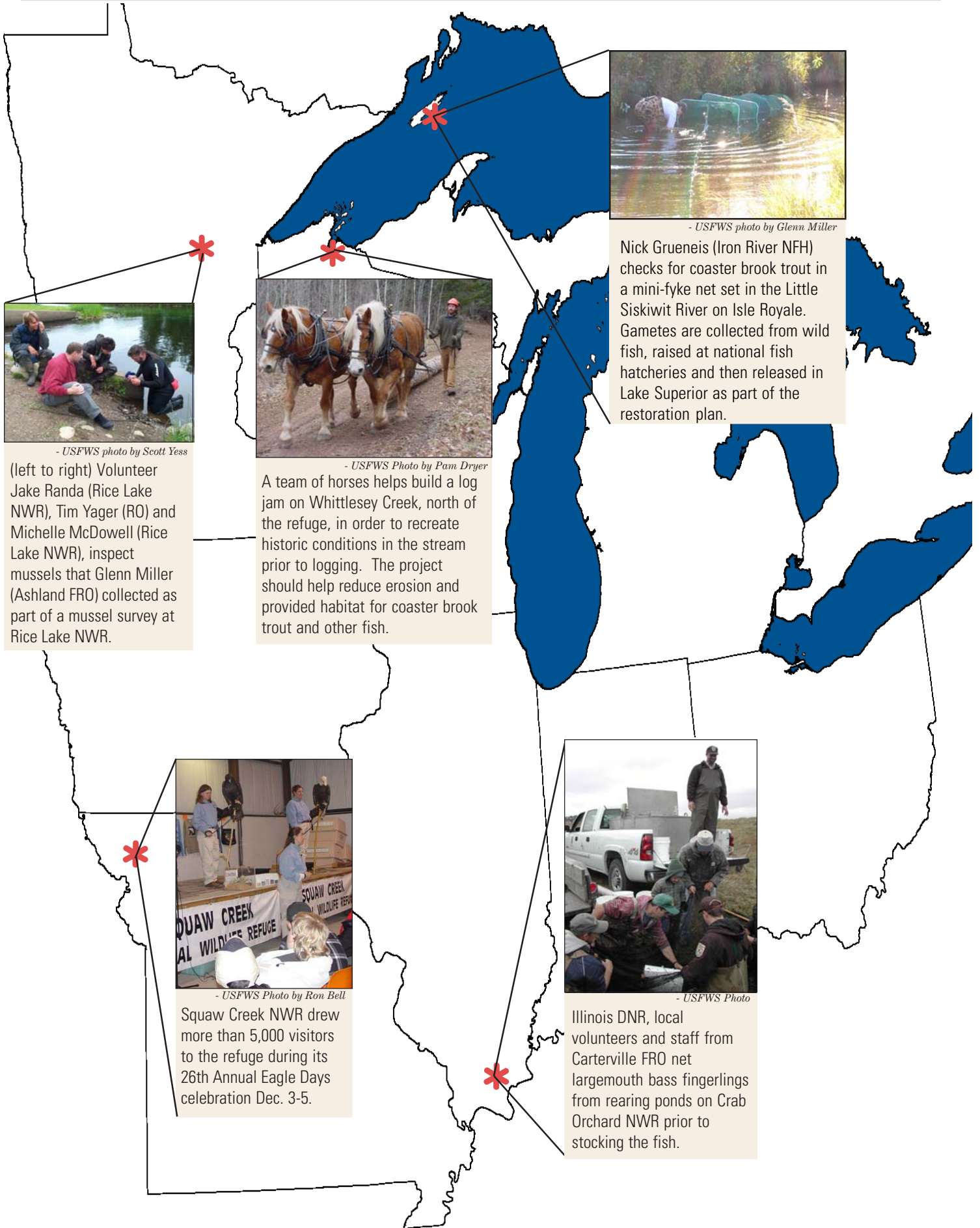


Photo by George Jameson

- USGS Photo by George Jameson

Black-crowned night heron.

Around the Region



- USFWS photo by Scott Yess

(left to right) Volunteer Jake Randa (Rice Lake NWR), Tim Yager (RO) and Michelle McDowell (Rice Lake NWR), inspect mussels that Glenn Miller (Ashland FRO) collected as part of a mussel survey at Rice Lake NWR.



- USFWS Photo by Pam Dryer

A team of horses helps build a log jam on Whittlesey Creek, north of the refuge, in order to recreate historic conditions in the stream prior to logging. The project should help reduce erosion and provided habitat for coaster brook trout and other fish.



- USFWS photo by Glenn Miller

Nick Grueneis (Iron River NFH) checks for coaster brook trout in a mini-fyke net set in the Little Siskiwit River on Isle Royale. Gametes are collected from wild fish, raised at national fish hatcheries and then released in Lake Superior as part of the restoration plan.



- USFWS Photo by Ron Bell

Squaw Creek NWR drew more than 5,000 visitors to the refuge during its 26th Annual Eagle Days celebration Dec. 3-5.



- USFWS Photo

Illinois DNR, local volunteers and staff from Carterville FRO net largemouth bass fingerlings from rearing ponds on Crab Orchard NWR prior to stocking the fish.

Let Them Know Who We Are

By Cheryl Groom, Minnesota Valley NWR

Have you ever been working in the field, at a visitor center or attending a public meeting and received a question about a state park down the road? And if you don't immediately know the answer, you get the response "Well you're the DNR, you should know that!"

Throughout its history, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has had an identity problem. Some of the earliest uniforms, clothes bought at JC Penny's with the patches sewn on by employees, did not allow for a consistent, identifiable image. A few decades ago, the Service decided to supply a uniform for field employees to wear and take pride in. This would also begin building an identity for the Service across the nation, so that Service employees from Alaska to Florida could easily be recognized as belonging to the same agency.

Now, and in the future, the image of the Service is going to play a vital role, from accurate scientific research to well maintained buildings and recreation areas. The first impressions of the Service the public and many of our partners form are based on the first employee they encounter. Wearing a non-uniform ball cap or blue jeans with a Service shirt gives the impression we are not professionals, and detracts from the overall image the Service has been building over the years.

Not all programs and offices have the same rules for when and where employees wear their uniforms. In fact, in certain locations of the country employees are sometimes advised not to wear their uniforms. However, if you are in a situation where you will be wearing your uniform, you should take enough pride in yourself and the Service to

wear the uniform correctly.

To assist employees and supervisors, a uniform policy is in place, covering areas such as when, where and how to wear the uniform. You can find the current policy at <http://policy.fws.gov/041fw4.html>.

Part of the uniform policy states:

A. Employees. Proper wearing of the uniform and proper conduct while in uniform are conditions of employment for all uniformed employees. You must have all required uniform items, wear them to approved standards, and maintain professional appearance and conduct while in uniform.

B. Supervisors. Supervisors are the key to the uniform program. They will ensure compliance with this policy, regularly evaluate subordinates, provide counseling or recommend actions for violation of uniform standards, and set an example through their own appearance in uniform.

When wearing the uniform, whether every day or once a year, we are all responsible for our appearance and the image we are presenting.

We do wonderful work, at each field station and at the Regional and Washington offices. As employees, we take pride in the fact that we are part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and everything that working for the Service means. Projecting that pride, showing who we are, and taking ownership of that identity is vital to the future of the Service.

Is wearing your uniform correctly going to save a duck or a fish? No, of course not — at least not directly. However the impression you make on people can make a difference for the Service. Positive experiences



What's wrong with this picture?

See if you can identify the uniform errors in this picture. (answers below)

and impressions can mean more support from our friends, local communities and partners. Improving the appearance and the recognition of the Service will help us get the resources needed to continue the great work we do everyday.

So for the ducks, fish, and every other animal, plant, and ecosystem we strive to improve and protect, take a second and think about the impression you make when you wear your uniform.

For more information, please contact the Region 3 Uniform Coordinator Cheryl Groom.

Uniform Errors

- 1) green t-shirt (should be white).
- 2) sneakers (should have on brown, closed toe, closed heel shoes or boots).
- 3) shirt un-tucked.
- 4) no belt.
- 5) no nameplate.

Accomplishment Reports

The following accomplishments reports were processed between Nov. 15 and Jan. 10, 2005:

1. **Pallid Sturgeon Stocking Plan Meeting**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
2. **Brrrr - Winter's Arrived in the Michigan UP**, *Tracy Roessner, Pendills Creek NFH*
3. **Wisconsin 2005 Phenology Calendar**, *Rhonda Krueger, Leopold WMD*
4. **Christmas Bird Count At Rice Lake NWR a New Year's Success**, *Michelle McDowell, Rice Lake NWR*
5. **Students Learn Impacts of Invasive Species**, *Katherine Mullett, Marquette Bio Station*
6. **Columbia Fishery Office Increases Access to Scientific Information**, *Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO*
7. **4th Quarter Diversity Report for Iron River NFH**, *Lawrie Gucinski, Iron River NFH*
8. **Diet of Invasive Round Goby Examined for Eggs of Native Fish**, *Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*
9. **Another Edition of the MTAN Goes to Print**, *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*
10. **Coded-Wire Tags Entered into MICRA Stock Assessment Database**, *Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO*
11. **Annual Toy Drive a Success at Ashland Fishery Office**, *Glenn Miller, Ashland FRO*
12. **Region 3 Employee Participates in "Wildlife Without Borders - Mexico Program"**, *Jane West, External Affairs*
13. **Annual Fisheries Coordination Meeting**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
14. **Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy Meeting**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
15. **2004 Christmas Bird Count at Squaw Creek Refuge**, *Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR*
16. **Ashland Fishery Office Private Lands Program - FY 2004 Accomplishment Summary**, *Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*
17. **Deputy Director Wooley's Speech to Midwest Association**, *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*
18. **Winter Pallid Sturgeon Monitoring on the Missouri River**, *Corey Lee, Columbia FRO*
19. **Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge Hosts First Annual Swan Festival**, *Rebecca Hinkle, Ottawa NWR*
20. **Alpena Fishery Office Biologists Visit Washington State Field Office to Share Restoration Experience**, *Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO*
21. **Lenawee Creek Horse Power Habitat Restoration**, *Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*
22. **Water Supply System Improvements Begin at Genoa Hatchery**, *Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH*
23. **Neosho Hatchery Staff Meets with Missouri Fishery Staff on Pallid Sturgeon**, *David Hendrix, Neosho NFH*
24. **Red Lake Walleye Restoration Effort Update**, *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*
25. **Engineered Log Jams Installed in Whittlesey Creek to Stabilize Creek and Improve Fish Habitat**, *Pam Dryer, Whittlesey Creek NWR*
26. **26th Annual Eagle Days at Squaw Creek Refuge**, *Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR*
27. **Human Disturbance Study on Black-Crowned Night Herons**, *Chivia Horton, Chicago FRO*
28. **Missouri Department of Conversation Tours Neosho Hatchery's Sturgeon Setup**, *David Hendrix, Neosho NFH*
29. **Survey Will Help Managers Understand Public Perception of Urban Native Landscaping Projects**, *Chivia Horton, Chicago FO*
30. **Pollinators Identified in Illinois and Iowa for the Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid**, *Cathy Pollack, Chicago FO*
31. **Service Fisheries Work Group Develops Fisheries Academy Program**, *Richard Nelson, LaCrosse Fish Health Center*
32. **Volunteers Getting Hitched and Moving On**, *Tracy Roessner, Pendills Creek NFH*
33. **Orchid Pollinator Identified in Illinois and Iowa**, *Cathy Pollack, Chicago FO*
34. **Avoiding the Spread of Exotic Species on Minnesota's Iron Range**, *Paul Burke, Twin Cities FO*
35. **Jordan River National Fish Hatchery to Begin Monthly Outreach Program**, *Timothy Smigielski, Jordan River NFH*
36. **Columbia Fishery Office Technician Receives Database Training**, *Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO*
37. **Construction Continues Through the Holidays**, *Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO*
38. **Round Goby Age Determination**, *Scott Koproski, Alpena FRO*
39. **Service and Partners Host Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Coordination Meeting**, *Gregg Baldwin, Marquette Bio Station*
40. **Tomahawk Creek Road Crossing Completed**, *Susan Wells, Alpena FRO*
41. **New Wetland Enhancement Project in Grant County Will Help Increase Waterfowl Production**, *Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC*
42. **Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem Team Website Updated**, *Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*
43. **Service Joins With USGS to Examine New Methods to Control Canada Thistle**, *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*
44. **St. Croix Wetland Management District Partners with U of MN on Grant Proposal**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
45. **Shallow Water Habitat Initiative**, *Wyatt Doyle, Columbia FO*
46. **Milwaukee Man Pleads Guilty to Killing Protected Gulls With His Car**, *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*
47. **Just Ahead of the Ultralight-led Cranes, Wild Whooping Crane Completes Fall Migration**, *Rachel Levin, External Affairs*
48. **Regions 3, 4, and 5 Initiate Rangewide Decision Analysis Process for Indiana Bat**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
49. **DeSoto Refuge Hosts Art of the Wild Exhibit**, *Cindy Myer, Desoto NWR*
50. **Green Bay Fisheries Office Assists with National Book Week at Porterfield Elementary School**, *Stewart Cogswell, Green Bay FRO*
51. **Stakeholder Forum Focuses on Indiana Bat Conservation in Coal Country**, *Andy King, Bloomington FO*
52. **Big Stone Refuge Partners with Local Prison to Produce Native Prairie Seed**, *Kim Bousquet, Big Stone NWR*
53. **Wildlife Management Initiative Presentation**, *Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)*
54. **Columbia Fishery Office Hosts Gerry Jackson and Todd Turner**, *Corey Lee, Columbia FRO*
55. **Recruiting Scientists from the University of Minnesota**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
56. **Update on the Status of the Asian Carp National Management and Control Plan**, *Greg Conover, Carterville FRO*
57. **Genoa National Fish Hatchery Lands new Administrative Assistant**, *Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH*
58. **New Year's Stock of Coaster Brook Trout Arrive at Genoa National Fish Hatchery**, *Roger Gordon, Genoa NFH*
59. **Big Muddy Refuge Strives to Improve Wildfire Protection Capabilities**, *Tim Haller, Big Muddy NWR*
60. **Friends Provide Hunting Information for Big Muddy Visitors**, *Tim Haller, Big Muddy NWR*
61. **Volunteers Help in Emiquon Refuge Hardwood Restoration**, *Ron Fisher, Illinois River NWFR*
62. **Alpena Fishery Office Tags Lake Whitefish for Study**, *Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO*
63. **Service Biologist Contacts Lake Huron Commercial Fishers**, *Adam Kowalski, Alpena FRO*
64. **Genoa National Fish Hatchery Gives Coloring Books to the Children of the 107th Maintenance Company**, *Tony Brady, Genoa NFH*
65. **Iron River Hatchery Finds a New Group of Friends**, *Angela Baran, Iron River NFH*
66. **Public Meeting Held to Discuss Detroit River's Grassy Island**, *Stephanie Millsap, East Lansing FO*
67. **Great Lakes Lake Sturgeon Coordination Meeting**, *Henry Quinlan, Ashland FRO*
68. **Twelve Eurasian Ruffe Captured From Lake Trout Spawning Habitat**, *Gary Czipinski, Ashland FRO*
69. **Lake Trout Spawning Surveys Completed By Green Bay Fisheries Office**, *Dale Hanson, Green Bay FRO*
70. **Three Southern Illinois Men Get Fines, Probation For Violating Dove Hunting Laws**, *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*
71. **Muscatatuck NWR Hosts Conservation Field Days**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
72. **Alpena Fishery Office Completes 2004 Mid-lake Lake Trout Survey**, *Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO*
73. **McCann and Palet Wetland Restoration Projects Completed**, *Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*
74. **East Lansing Office Briefs Tribes on Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway Study**, *Barbara Hosler, East Lansing FO*
75. **ROS Tischer Participates In Franklin Middle School Choir Program**, *Gary Tischer, Agassiz NWR*
76. **Bison Herd Management at Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge**, *Scott Ford, Neal Smith NWR*
77. **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Establishes Native Grasses**, *Steve Dushane, Ottawa NWR*
78. **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Restores Five Wetland Basins in Lenawee County, Mich**, *Steve Dushane, Ottawa NWR*
79. **Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Restores 17 Wetlands in Hillsdale County, Mich**, *Steve Dushane, Ottawa NWR*

It's a Wonderful Life

My beloved niece recently started working in France, so I spent part of the holiday season visiting her. During an introduction to one her new friends I was asked about my job, and I replied in flawless French: "I command wild animals."

Well, not exactly. Once the laughter subsided I better marshaled my foreign language skill and haltingly (but accurately) explained my job, the Fish and Wildlife Service mission, and our organization. And then the young French woman said to me: "You have wonderful work."

I hear it often (usually in English, I'm relieved to say). On airplanes I strike up casual conversations with people sitting next to me and after describing what the Service does I invariably hear comments about how great that job must be, how lucky I am and how thankful they are for our work. The same thing happens when meeting new neighbors, or during fellowship at church, or catching up with classmates. People are happy to hear about what we do and they are almost envious that I get to be part of this.

They are right, but the description of our work is only part of the story, and I wish I could replay my "mental video" of experiences in Region 3, to more readily share the story of the great people who do this work. What would that video show? So many images from visits, conversations and observations of the Service's work in Region 3. For example:

Tromping around the Kaskaskia River watershed with Joyce Collins and Wayne Fischer, a local landowner proudly scoops up handfuls of water from ponds newly re-

stored through Partners funding. He beams. So do we.

In late December while in Chicago to announce an innovative partnership between Chevron, the Service, and Illinois to address a natural resource damage assessment in Lawrenceville, Kelly Bakayza from the Solicitor's Office in Pittsburgh took me aside to tell me how wonderful Mike Coffey, Rick Nelson and Ginger Molitor are, and what a pleasure it is to work with them. "You are so lucky to have them on your team," she said. I agree.

Due to scheduling that shortens my stay, I am limited to a whirlwind road trip around Patoka NWR, and as Bill McCoy drives he describes each hill and dale like it is family – lovingly, watchfully, caringly. (I hang on to my seatbelt for dear life, hoping his enthusiasm doesn't distract him from stop signs!). When he returns me to my car for my rushed departure he's like a proud Dad. I give him a hug; he loves his refuge.

Standing alongside John Magera, Dick Steinbach, Lois Lawson, Greg Conover and more Service staff and NGOs at the ceremony to dedicate the Beaver Island acquisition for Middle Mississippi NWR, the crowd turns as an eagle soars over the bluff and helps us commemorate the occasion; no words at the ceremony could have better celebrated that day.

Nervously attending my first Executive Council meeting for the U.S. v. Michigan treaty, I observe the respect and high regard extended to Mark Holey, Jerry McClain, Aaron Woldt and others from the Service as they contribute their energy and expertise to ad-



- USFWS Photo by Scott Flaherty

RD Thorson takes the opportunity to talk with people about the Service as she travels across the region, the country and the world.

vance this effort. I am so proud to be associated with them.

Seeing Whittlesey Creek NWR through Pam Dryer's eyes; being proudly shown the innovations and the accomplishments from each employee at the Sign Shop in Winona; watching happy faces gathered around Doug Brewer as he grills burgers for his staff (and Refuge Friends) during another successful International Migratory Birds Day....No camera or words can capture the mood and meaning of these images and experiences. I carry them with me every day and I try and share them with envious people everywhere I go.

We have a wonderful mission. I watch our work being done by wonderful people. January is the traditional time of year to look back and assess what has passed. It looks to me like being part of Region 3 is a wonderful life.

**- Regional Director
Robyn Thorson**