



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Friends and Volunteers

Annual Update FY 2006

People Making a Difference



Volunteers, Friends organizations and other partners are essential allies for many programs within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Every day these devoted individuals and organizations play vital roles in helping the Service fulfill its mission and many important goals. Each year, volunteers, Friends organizations, and partners generously give time, expertise and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System, fish hatcheries, and other Service offices. They play an important role in helping serve over 40 million visitors who enjoy our public lands.

Volunteer assistance is significant. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, 36,169 volunteers donated 1,447,421 hours. The value of their labor was \$26,111,475. Using the Independent Sector's current dollar value of \$18.04, their in-kind services equaled the equivalent of 696 full-time employees. Ten new Friends organizations were established in FY 06, bringing our total to more than 200.

Volunteers help the Service in a variety of ways. Some work full-time while others assist with a few hours a week or month, or during a special event. Many volunteers conduct fish and wildlife population surveys; band ducks; lead tours and provide information to school groups and other visitors; assist with laboratory research; work on cultural resources projects; perform clerical and administrative duties, work with computers and other technical equipment; and much more.

There is no better way to show you the value of our volunteers, Friends organizations and partners than to share some of their successes. These contributions are being made at Service sites from Alaska to Maine and from Hawaii to the Caribbean.



Volunteers and Service employees working together teach children fishing skills in Washington, D.C.

Volunteer Highlights

Marion Sansing has astounded refuge staff and fellow volunteers with the amount of work she has accomplished in her relatively short time volunteering at Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, MS. Marion is this year's recipient of the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Volunteer of the Year Award. This award recognizes the efforts of an exemplary volunteer. She partnered with Mississippi State University to develop a native plant garden at the visitor center, procured print, radio, and even billboard advertisements to attract volunteers and visitors to the refuge and oversaw all the publicity and implementation of their annual photography contest.

Service archaeologist Rick Kanaski and volunteers worked on an archaeological dig along the Jungle Trail at Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge, FL. Rick Kanaski was leading an archaeological sampling on a 200-acre tract to see if there are any historically significant remains in the soil before restoration of the old grove is returned to its native state.

Nine volunteers at the Montana Ecological Services Field Office, MT, logged in 4,952 hours monitoring wolf populations and assisting in wolf/ungulate research by radio-tracking wolves, investigating winter wolf kills, and documenting denning activities and reproduction.

Kris Arcuri was named John Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge, NJ, Volunteer of the Year. A retired school teacher, Kris has been volunteering at the refuge since 2000 where she continues to volunteer at schools doing science projects which she shares with the refuge, volunteers at the Friends nature store, helps with the weekly waterbird surveys and leads trips for school groups.

Hundreds of volunteers gathered to plant 20,000 seedlings on 42 acres of the Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge, TX. All the seedlings are native plants that will provide food, habitat, and cover for birds, butterflies and other wildlife.

Shelley Simmonds, a volunteer at the Carterville Fisheries Resource Office (IL) contributed 1,530 hours in FY 06. She completed a wide range of administrative duties, including answering the phone, greeting visitors, providing computer technical assistance and completing daily paperwork.



Megan assisting at the Entiat kids fishing day, talking to boy scouts about the Pacific lamprey in our office's aquarium display. Mid-Columbia River Fish Hatchery.

Friends Highlights

Friends are private, independent, community-based, not-for-profit organizations formed primarily by citizen volunteers who support the mission and purposes of a national wildlife refuge or other Service offices. These important allies support their refuge or site by encouraging community participation in programs, and building long-term support. They raise funds and provide volunteer staff for conservation work that might otherwise go undone. They assist with education programs and special events. Friends provide an essential link to the community to promote land stewardship. They contribute and leverage time, expertise and resources for the benefit of wildlife conservation. Every year their numbers grow.



Eastern Neck NWR - volunteers spent many hours constructing the new observation platform, interpretive trail and photo blind behind the Headquarters/Visitor center.

Friends of San Luis Valley National Wildlife Refuge, CA, was this year's recipient of Friends Organization of the Year, an award which recognizes the efforts of an exemplary Friends organization and sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Friends of San Luis Valley support Baca, Alamosa and Monte Vista refuges and are responsible for the wildlife-observation walking trail on the Monte Vista refuge and the Visitor Center's new Wetland Learning Center at Alamosa.

Gail Dreis, a language arts teacher at First Flight Middle School in Kill Devil Hills came up with the idea of a Junior Friends of the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge, NC, because of her dedication to teaching middle school students and appreciating the beauty and fragility of North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, NM, held their first Environmental Film Festival. The festival used the power of film to link the Friends organization, the community of Socorro and the film community to promote environmental awareness and appreciation.

One of the newest Refuge System Friends' organizations, Friends of Alaska Refuges, AK, spent the summer battling one of the Refuge System's biggest problems – invasive species. Friends and volunteers pulled up white sweet clover at Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge and fought Canada thistle at Izembek Refuge.

The Friends of the Morris Wetland Management District (MN) applied for and received a \$58,000 private stewardship grant to remove invasive trees from large blocks of native prairie in western Minnesota. The Friends hired contractors to remove invasive trees on four sites, restoring natural, open landscapes on over 750 acres of grassland.

Partner Highlights

Each year the Service works with an ever-widening group of other organizations. Long-time partners such as the Student Conservation Association, National Environmental Education Training Foundation, and Take Pride in America volunteer many hours in support of our projects.

Student Conservation Association

For over 20 years the Service and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) have been successful partners. SCA continues to provide service opportunities to young people at Service sites through its conservation crews that make up SCA's national high school programs, the Conservation Internship Program and the Conservation Corps Program.



SW LA - Sabine - volunteers smile after picking up trash from Hurricane Katrina

In FY 06, 109 Conservation Interns served at 50 Service sites in 28 states.

Several examples include Noah Donovan who served at the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, AZ. At the refuge his duties included conducting endangered species surveys as well as surveying for the cactus ferruginous pygmy owl and the Pima pineapple cactus. Emily Neidigh had an impact on approximately 350 students and teachers during her intern at Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge, OK. When asked what Emily valued most about the program, Emily said, "The diversity of interns' backgrounds and education and the ability to introduce students to the Service."

National Environmental Education Training Foundation

National Public Lands Day (NPLD), sponsored by the National Environmental Education Training Foundation, is the largest volunteer hands-on activity of its kind in the country. Every September on a Saturday designated as National Public Lands Day, thousands of volunteers roll up their sleeves and make significant improvements to America's public lands. On September 28, 2006, 33 Service sites and several thousand volunteers participated in National Public Lands Day.

At John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, PA, volunteers worked in the native plant garden and parking lot gardens weeding, mulching, and pruning.

Volunteers at Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge, TN, weeded three backyard habitat vegetative plots near the visitor center and picked up trash along a 1 ¾ scenic auto tour route.

A prairie restoration event was the venue at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, MN, where volunteers pulled invasive plants, collected seeds and picked up litter.



These students pick up trash during a Shorebird Sister Schools Program field trip. During the same field trip, they observed shorebirds in their natural habitat and examined the estuarine invertebrates that shorebirds feed on during their migratory journeys. Oregon Coastal Complex.

Take Pride in America

Take Pride in America is a national partnership established by the Department of the Interior which inspires Americans to volunteer in caring for their public lands. Their goal is to instill an active sense of ownership and responsibility in every citizen for natural, cultural and historic resources, and to support and recognize the effort of those who volunteer for public lands.

The annual Take Pride in America awards recognize exceptional stewardship in the following categories: corporations, individuals, non-profit organizations, schools, local or state governments, volunteers, or Federal land managers. All of the Take Pride in America award winners were honored during a special event in Washington, D.C., on September 14. Three of the individuals and groups that were recognized are associated with the Service.

Roy Lowe, Oregon Coastal Complex, OR, was named one of five Federal Land Managers of the Year. Roy's commitment to the conservation of natural resources has reaped dividends in the form of a proactive and visionary land program on the Oregon Coast. Lauren Giebler, Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge, ID, received recognition for her contribution of over 3,100 hours volunteering with initiative, enthusiasm, and creativity at Deer Flat.

Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program was honored for bringing together the efforts of the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, NV) and U.S. Forest Service in southern Nevada.

Federal Legislation Authorizes 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 Fish and Wildlife Service to accept volunteer services. When the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act was reauthorized in 2004, Congress reaffirmed its interest and provided tools to help the Service involve the American people as stewards of our nation's wildlife.



Volunteer Mike Pixley helping at the FWS booth at the 2006 Fisharama - Athens Ecological Services Field Office.

How do I find out about volunteer opportunities with the FWS?

Visit our web site at <http://www.fws.gov> or call 1/800-344 WILD. Specific volunteer opportunities are posted at <http://www.volunteer.gov/gov>.

Jones Hole NFH student volunteers were a tremendous asset to the fish production program at Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery this past year, learning a considerable amount about the salmonid culture program.



Bear River - The Spade & Hope Garden Club (Brigham City, Utah), led by Phyllis Nielsen, took on a small landscaping project to enhance the area around the information kiosk and the beginning of the boardwalk/entry to the new wildlife education center.



Migratory Bird Management Office volunteer Anna Anderson checks the float angle of goose eggs to determine stage of incubation on the Yukon-Kuskowim Delta coastal zone in the Yukon National Wildlife Refuge.



Arctic National Wildlife Refuge volunteer Vladimir Tumskoy, a Russian post-doctoral associate, examines underground ice wedges along Sheenjek and Porcupine Rivers.

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