

2000 Volunteer Report

Volunteers conserve and interpret fish and wildlife and their habitat for present and future generations



A Special Message from the Director

Dear Volunteers,

With great appreciation, I thank you and celebrate your many successes for this year! Your accomplishments are testament to the many hours of hard work you have selflessly dedicated to conserving America's public lands for wildlife and people. You truly are making a difference!

Similar to the diversity of lands conserved by the Service, from deserts, forests, swamps, mountains, prairies, and beaches, we find great diversity among you, our volunteers. From your diversity, the Service has gained a wealth of talents and skills that continue to help it move toward fulfilling its mission to conserve, protect and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

Volunteers, you provide endless support for a variety of projects. For instance, students from Currituck County High School volunteered their time and constructed five hunting blinds at Currituck NWR in North Carolina. In New Mexico, volunteer assistance at Mora National Fish Hatchery contributed to its selection by the Department of Energy for the Water Conservation Award. In addition, volunteers at Nisqually NWR in Washington aided in public environmental education efforts by staffing the new visitor center five days a week. These contributions are just a few of many made by volunteers across the nation.

As volunteers, you serve as ambassadors for the Service within your communities by heightening awareness and support. The circle of support volunteers create continues to widen and strengthen with nearly 36,000 of you donating over one million hours last year. You are an integral piece of the puzzle that helps make America's vast network of natural treasures complete. Thank you for keeping the volunteer spirit alive!

"Never doubt that a small, thoughtful group of concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

— Margaret Mead

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Key

AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
ESO	Ecological Services Office
FRO	Fisheries Resource Office
LEO	Law Enforcement Office
NCTC	National Conservation Training Center
NFH	National Fish Hatchery
NWFR	National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
NWRS	National Wildlife Refuge System
SCA	Student Conservation Association
USFWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
WMD	Wetland Management District
WO	Washington, D.C. Office

Volunteers Make It Happen

For nearly 100 years, individual citizens, groups, and organizations have significantly contributed to protecting and enhancing America's vast network of wild places. With the beginning of a new century, we salute nearly 36,000 volunteers who continue to make a difference for wildlife, habitat and people. The annual Volunteer Report is our way of focusing on the many accomplishments of volunteer programs across the nation, highlighting innovative approaches, and listing challenges and concerns for the future. With this report, we strive to promote the volunteers that make it happen and acknowledge all those who give with their hearts, minds and hands.

What Gives Us the Authority to Accept Volunteer Services?

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a-j), as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 7421) and the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1998 (Pub.L.105-242) authorizes us to accept volunteer services.

It is our goal to engage the public in fulfilling our mission of...“working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.” Volunteers are vital to this effort. They work in the field and in visitor

centers, at refuges and hatcheries, and in all programs and levels of our organization. They play an essential role in education and promote a better understanding of the natural world, contributing to its conservation.

For more information visit our website at www.fws.gov or write to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Headquarters, National Wildlife Refuge System, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 670, Arlington, VA 22203. Contact the Regional Volunteer Coordinator in your area to learn more about our volunteer opportunities (addresses and phone numbers are listed on the inside back cover).



Patuxent Research Refuge (MD) volunteers are always ready to provide courteous visitor services with a smile!

The Volunteer Legacy

Since the beginning of the National Wildlife Refuge System, volunteers have been an integral part of efforts to protect the heritage of America's wild places. It all began with a small island, Pelican Island, and one man, Paul Kroegel. In 1903, Pelican Island, located in the shallow Indian River near Sebastian, Florida, was the last breeding ground for brown pelicans along the entire east coast of Florida. At the same time, brown pelicans were hunted for feathers to adorn hats and quills for pens.

Instead of continuing to watch the slaughter of thousands of pelicans and other wading birds, Paul Kroegel took an active role in protecting Pelican Island and its wildlife by raising awareness among his peers and spending time patrolling the island on a volunteer basis.

In 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established Pelican Island as the first Federal Bird Reservation. It is now recognized as the first refuge of the NWRS.



USFWS

Paul Kroegel on Pelican Island

2000 Program Highlights

- Volunteers contributed more than 1.3 million hours of service in FY 2000, a 4.4% increase from last year at an estimated value of \$14 million!
- The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service volunteer program saw a 24% increase in the number of volunteers in FY 2000!
- Congress allocated \$1,043,000 in FY 2000 to support programs included in the NWRS Volunteer and Community Partnership Act of 1998, specifically volunteer coordinator pilot positions, environmental education, and the Friends initiative.
- The NWRS Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act *Promise Team* is updating and improving policies for the volunteer program. The team is working to establish guidelines for working with partners and volunteers that are compatible with the mission of the USFWS and NWRS.
- In the age of the information superhighway, we continue to expand our web-based information. A Federal Interagency Team is working to establish a consolidated web site, "volunteer.gov," where potential volunteers can match their skills and interests with opportunities across the nation.
- In FY 2000, volunteers accomplished 20% of staff work completed in the NWRS. Their contributions to the USFWS equate to 639 full-time employees.

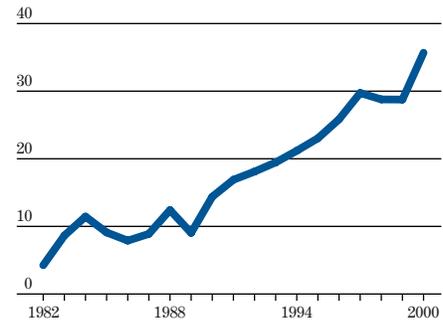
Growth of the Volunteer Program

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Number of Volunteers</i>	<i>Hours Donated</i>	<i>Dollar Value</i>
1982	4,251	128,440	\$854,000
1983	8,638	479,319	\$3,187,000
1984	11,447	527,150	\$3,632,000
1985	9,103	441,820	\$3,532,000
1986	7,892	386,934	\$3,094,000
1987	8,891	383,983	\$3,157,000
1988	12,416	478,568	\$3,871,000
1989	9,036	575,695	\$4,427,095
1990	14,382	713,441	\$5,593,377
1991	16,895	768,820	\$6,273,571
1992	18,103	968,401	\$8,231,409
1993	19,460	993,681	\$8,734,447
1994	21,186	880,999*	\$8,069,951
1995	23,034	909,072	\$8,590,729
1996	25,840	1,108,208	\$10,860,439
1997	29,734	1,335,738	\$13,090,232
1998	28,780	1,505,222	\$14,841,489
1999	28,757	1,277,207	\$13,078,599
2000	35,684	1,332,875	\$14,021,845

*In FY 1994 Region 8 Volunteer Program transferred from FWS to National Biological Survey.

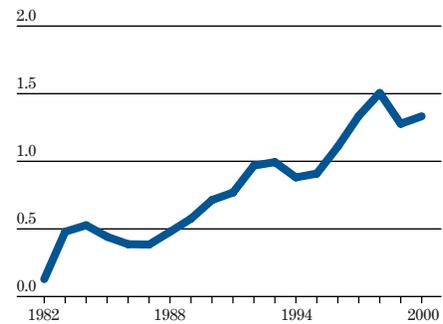
Number of Volunteers

In Thousands



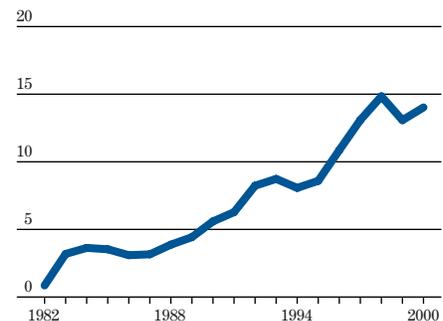
Hours Donated

In Millions



Dollar Value

In Millions



What Is the Volunteer Program?

In a world where we find ourselves occupied with work, school, family, and extracurricular activities, it is inspiring to know that some citizens continue to find time to volunteer for meaningful causes. As volunteers, they believe in and actively contribute to our mission.

The volunteer programs within the USFWS are as diverse as the individuals who comprise them. One refuge might have two dedicated volunteers who conduct weekly songbird counts, while another refuge has one hundred volunteers who work to keep the visitor center open every day of the week. Whether we find volunteers working at national wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, wetland management districts, regional offices, or ecological services offices, we know they are helping to make a difference.



Volunteers of all ages assisted Sherburne NWR (MN) with their pest plant program by digging and potting 300 purple loosestrife plants for use in beetle production.



Don and Linda Barrows greet visitors at the Trustom Pond NWR (RI) Visitor Contact Station every Wednesday, rain or shine!



Volunteer Charles Nash organizes Federal Junior Duck Stamp artwork entries for the Rhode Island competition, which is coordinated by the Friends of the Rhode Island NWRs.

Volunteer Spotlight

Jim Niner
Leadville National Fish Hatchery
Leadville, Colorado

Leadville National Fish Hatchery in Colorado found itself without a manager, assistant manager and maintenance officer all within a short period of time. As a result, the facility was drastically short handed. Fortunately, Jim Niner a volunteer in his third year at the hatchery stepped in and performed virtually all the duties of a full-time maintenance officer. In a six-week period, Jim spent 280 hours operating heavy equipment, changing oil, repairing pumps and motors, designing and installing an alarm for low water levels, maintaining grounds and facility, and contributing to countless other projects. In addition, Jim assisted the fishery biologist with fish culture projects and paperwork.

Just as Paul Kroegel took it upon himself to volunteer and protect the wildlife of Pelican Island, we find that same volunteer spirit in Jim Niner. Thank you Jim for making a difference at Leadville National Fish Hatchery!

Who Are Our Volunteers?

By asking volunteers “why” they want to volunteer, we discover a little bit about who they are. Our volunteers are people who want to give back to their communities, parents who want to be good stewards of the land and set examples for their children, retired people willing to share their wealth of knowledge, concerned citizens of all ages who want to learn more about conservation, and passionate people who enjoy the outdoors and want to spread the word about America’s greatest natural treasures.



Senior volunteer Darwin Barnes shows off a stringer full of cutthroat trout he caught at the Leadville NFH (CO).

Take a moment to meet some of our dedicated volunteers:

Daniel Rizzolo dedicated the months of May through August to a western sandpiper study taking place at Yukon Delta NWR (AK). He arrived on the study area when snowdrifts reached the peak of the cabin in which he stayed. By the time he left, the sandpipers had nested and fledged their young. Dan’s efforts were instrumental in the success of the study.

Senior volunteer *Darwin Barnes* has been volunteering at the Leadville NFH (CO) for seven years. Darwin is responsible for keeping the public fishing area safe and attractive for visitors. He greets hatchery visitors and provides courteous service through his interpretation of the facilities.

Douglas High School biology staff and students are up to their ears in rare frogs. Teachers and students are working together to raise rare Chiricahua leopard frogs at their classroom facility for reintroduction efforts on San Bernardino NWR (AZ). But, they are not the only ones dealing with tadpoles. Volunteer scouts rebuilt a refuge greenhouse



Members of the Friends of the Kenai NWR (AK) look for spring bird migrants while enjoying the view from atop Skilak Lookout Trail.

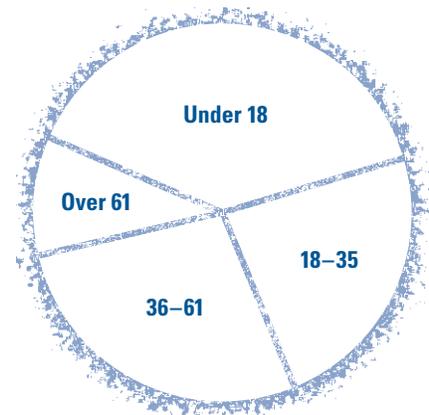
and pond which is now being used to raise rare Mexican Tarahumara frogs for reintroduction into native habitats in Arizona.

Kirsten Carlin-Rosin has been volunteering at Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR (CO) since the age of 13. While she is now in her third year as a full-time student at the University of Colorado at Denver, she continues to support the refuge by conducting Saturday Wild Treks Naturalist activities, working in the refuge bookstore, assisting with volunteer recruitment, coordinating volunteer training and being editor of the monthly volunteer newsletter.

Age Range of Volunteers

Region	Under 18	18-35	36-61	Over 61	Total
1	2,061	2,397	2,898	659	8,015
2	4,535	576	1,150	395	6,656
3	2,013	1,856	1,752	685	6,306
4	1,078	1,000	997	671	3,746
5	2,458	1,268	1,936	910	6,572
6	1,670	1,111	955	278	4,014
7	38	123	146	22	329
HQ			1	1	2
NCTC	10	21	4	9	44
Totals	13,863	8,352	9,839	3,630	35,684

Age Range of Volunteers

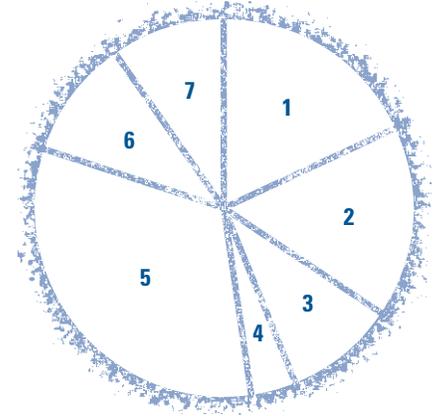


Volunteer Program Values

Volunteer Program Operating Costs

Region	Operations Costs	Staff Hours
1	\$379,400	208,162
2	\$342,147	191,849
3	\$198,295	171,392
4	\$81,263	231,394
5	\$678,900	203,778
6	\$213,600	87,044
7	\$203,760	49,902
HQ		40
NCTC	\$5,000	
Totals	\$2,102,365	1,143,561

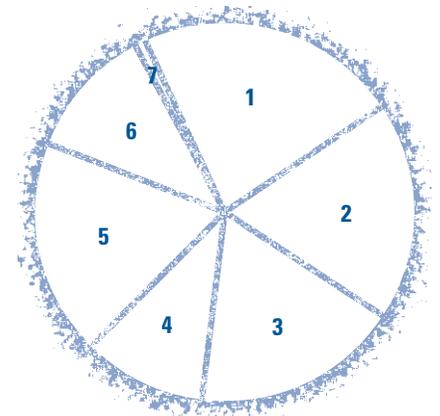
Volunteer Program Operating Costs By Region



Volunteer Hours/Value

Region	Volunteers	Hours	Value*
1	8,015	268,934	\$2,829,185
2	6,656	209,642	\$2,205,434
3	6,306	203,560	\$2,141,451
4	3,746	243,996	\$2,566,838
5	6,572	226,448	\$2,382,233
6	4,014	128,127	\$1,347,896
7	329	49,902	\$524,969
HQ	2	201	\$2,115
NCTC	44	2,065	\$21,724
Totals	35,684	1,332,875	\$14,021,845

Number of Volunteers By Region



*Value is derived using the U.S. Office of Personnel Management 1999 General Pay Schedule of a GS 5-1.

**Historically, Alaska (Region 7) has the fewest number of volunteers. However, these volunteers work long hours to accomplish their goals within the short, demanding summer season.

Special Programs

Student Conservation Association (SCA)

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Student Conservation Association, partners for 19 years, provide students an opportunity to volunteer while gaining valuable work experience in their field of study. SCA students are extremely motivated and perform at the highest level. Field stations benefit from their quality work while the students develop good management and leadership skills. This valuable partnership has sparked many lifelong mentor-style relationships and a camaraderie among fellow SCA students who have shared in the same vision of “learning through serving.” SCA recruited, placed and supported more than 80 Service volunteers and interns across the country through four programs: the Resource Assistant Program, the Conservation Associates Program, the Conservation Work Crew Program, and the Conservation Career Development Program.

Resource Assistant Program

This year 67 college-age students were placed in USFWS positions. Many students were able to earn college credit for their volunteer service, making it one of the most popular programs offered by SCA. Working under the guidance of professionals, students conducted surveys, censuses, investigations and studies, developed and conducted environmental education programs, provided visitor services, and much more.

Conservation Associates Program

The Conservation Associates Program was established in 1996 to allow students long-term appointments. Students have the opportunity to work on communication skills, develop peer relationships, master skills, and experience the joy that comes with completing a project. From Kenai NWR in Alaska to National Key

Deer Refuge in the Florida Keys, 22 interns gave their skills and time to 11 field stations in return for an opportunity to participate in current wildlife research and explore natural resource issues facing our field stations.

Conservation Work Crew Program

Conservation Work Crews are co-educational groups that team six to ten students from across the United States under the direction of skilled SCA crew leaders. Crew members are responsible for completing specific conservation improvement projects, such as trail construction and maintenance, site restoration and revegetation, and bridge construction. One crew of 8 students was placed at Kenai NWR in Alaska during 2000.

The Diversity Internship Program

The Diversity Internship Program, formerly the Conservation Career Development Program, offers minorities and women in college paid, seasonal conservation internships throughout the United States in a variety of stimulating disciplines. In 2000, three students were placed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Diversity Internship Program — one at the National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia, another at the Fish Genetics Laboratory in Arkansas, and the final intern with the Service’s Division of Fish and Wildlife Management and Habitat Restoration in Arlington, Virginia.

For more information about the Student Conservation Association, please contact:

Wallace Elton, Director
Resource Assistant Program
The Student Conservation Association
P.O. Box 550
Charlestown, NH 03603
603/543 1700



Jennifer Brownless, SCA student, learns to operate a Coulter Counter (a specialized piece of equipment used to analyze fish blood samples) under the guidance of Brian Hickson, fisheries biologist, at the Warm Springs regional Fisheries Center (GA).

American Association of Retired Persons Volunteer Talent Bank

The Volunteer Talent Bank is a national volunteer referral service managed by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). Members of the AARP and others, age 50 and over, interested in volunteer opportunities can register with the Talent Bank. This is a valuable resource and an excellent method to attract and recruit experienced individuals who have a wealth of knowledge and a willingness to share. Potential volunteers are matched with positions that best suit their interests, skills, time commitment, and geographic location.

For more information about the Talent Bank or to see if there is a potential volunteer for your needs, contact:

Cynthia Langley
AARP Volunteer Talent Bank
601 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20049
202/434 3211

Partnerships and Support Groups

Support Groups

Citizens have been involved in supporting their hometown refuges for many years through the establishment of small nonprofit organizations. In 1996, we established the "Friends Initiative" to encourage and organize efforts to promote community involvement in activities associated with the NWRS. With this program, support groups (often referred to as "Friends") began to spring up across the nation. Through the formation of over 120 support groups, citizens across the nation have told us that they are passionate and concerned about their local refuges. Thanks to their support, we've already surpassed our goal to establish 100 groups by

the NWRS 100th anniversary in 2003. In FY 2000, 13 new groups "hopped on board" and are helping us "sail" into our next 100 years!

It is important to the USFWS to give support back to our Friends groups. We provide support through the development of training courses, mentoring, and financial assistance in cooperation with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.*

The Service is working with the National Wildlife Refuge Association to host a Friends conference in early 2002, which will provide the opportunity to network and get energized from sharing one another's accomplishments.

Audubon Refuge Keepers (ARK)

In 1996, the National Audubon Society launched a nationwide initiative to build and encourage community appreciation and support for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Local support groups, called Audubon Refuge Keepers (ARK), are involved in a variety of projects associated with their local refuges. In FY 2000, ARK established 6 new groups, raising the total number of ARK groups to 81.

Cooperating Associations

During FY 2000, 53 Cooperating Associations operated to support 82 field stations, compared to 38 Cooperating Associations on 60 field stations in FY 1998. Cooperating

Partnerships and Support Group Highlights

Friends of Anahuac Refuge helped sponsor the BioBlitz 2000 at Anahuac NWR (TX). Friends and volunteers worked to identify over 2,000 species of flora and fauna throughout the year.

Friends of Squaw Creek NWR (MO) received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to build a new handicapped accessible trail. Refuge staff and volunteers completed the Mike Callow Memorial Trail in honor of a USFWS employee who died in the line of duty.

Volunteers from the *Friends of the Shiawassee NWR* (MI) and the Saginaw Bay Field and Stream Club assisted with a project to assess northern pike reproduction in various wetlands on the refuge. The biweekly study was labor intensive and required hiking and canoeing to set and check nets in remote areas. Refuge staff states, "The volunteers were valuable assets to the project and gave 100% of their energy to make the project a success!"

The *Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society* at Alligator River NWR (NC) received the Governor's Award for Conservation Organization of the Year.

The *Nisqually Refuge Cooperating Association* was established this year and operates the sales outlet in the new visitor center at Nisqually NWR (WA).



Dawn Failing and Cathy Martin, members of Friends of Bombay Hook, Inc., conduct a snow goose cooking demonstration at the Waterfowl Festival at Bombay Hook NWR (DE).

*See general notes.

associations are nonprofit partner corporations which receive authorization to create revenue on public lands. The National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966 and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962, as amended, outline this approval.

Cooperating Associations work with us to create, produce, and sell educational publications, maps, natural resource-related items, and services. Educational materials and services are offered to heighten the visitors' understanding of the natural, cultural, and recreation resources of the area while supporting the mission of the Service. They provide additional assistance by donating to various projects and programs. In FY 2000, gross sales exceeded \$3.4 million with \$1.07 million returned directly to respective stations.

Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (C.A.R.E.)

The Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, or C.A.R.E., is a coalition of 20 diverse conservation and environmental groups. C.A.R.E. formed in 1996 to raise the profile of the NWRS. The coalition's foundation rests on the premise that if the NWRS is going to be successful in the next century, it must have the operational and maintenance capabilities to allow it to meet its "wildlife first" mission. The coalition defines itself by setting guidelines that restrict C.A.R.E. activities and discussions to issues of operational and maintenance funding only. NWRS policy, land acquisition, and other issues are left for individual groups to tackle, knowing that all of these issues will be better addressed if the NWRS has adequate funding.

C.A.R.E. (Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement) Members

American Birding Association
American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Assateague Coastal Trust
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Ducks Unlimited
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Izaak Walton League of America
National Audubon Society
National Rifle Association of America
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Safari Club International
The Wildlife Society
The Wilderness Society
Trout Unlimited
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Legislative Fund of America
Wildlife Management Institute

National Public Lands Day 2000

National Public Lands Day is a program of the National Environmental Education & Training Foundation (NEETF) in partnership with multiple federal agencies, state, and local governments and private partners. The event strives to enlighten citizens of the value of our natural resources, but is designed as a "work day."

In FY 2000, 30 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service sites coordinated projects that involved 1,200 volunteers contributing 6,000 hours!

The USFWS accounted for 10% of all sites nationwide. We applaud the individual sites, coordinators, support groups, and volunteers for making a difference and raising awareness of our nation's beautiful wild places.

Recognition of Outstanding Volunteers

This year the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation sponsored the National Wildlife Refuge System Awards. Among them are the *Volunteer of the Year Award* and the *Support Group of the Year Award*. These awards are considered the most prestigious honors in the Refuge System and are presented at an awards ceremony held during the annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

Volunteer of the Year Award

Harry Sanders, long-time volunteer at Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR in California, was presented the prestigious *Volunteer of the Year Award* by the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Harry is the mastermind behind the San Francisco Bay Native Plant Nursery at the refuge. He has donated thousands of hours managing the nursery along with cultivating more than 12,000 plants of 250 different native species. His work played a key role in the USFWS's native habitat restoration efforts in the San Francisco Bay area. His expert knowledge in horticulture has been used to organize plant sales and native plant symposia, each raising thousands of dollars. Sanders has raised awareness for habitat restoration within the community and has enlisted the help of several nonprofit horticultural organizations. Thank you Harry for your incredible dedication and for making Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR grow and bloom!

Support Group of the Year Award

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation joined the National Wildlife Refuge Association in honoring the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges with the Support Group of the Year Award. The group was instrumental in securing funds and providing volunteer services for three refuges



Shown from left to right: David Jamiel (Refuge Employee of the Year), Marshall Jones (USFWS Acting Director), Molly Krival (National Wildlife Refuge Association Board Member), Al Trout (Refuge Manager of the Year), George Hoffman (Support Group of the Year Award, President), John Berry (National Fish and Wildlife Foundation), Dorothy Hoffman (Support Group of the Year Award, Treasurer), and Harry Sanders (Volunteer of the Year Award).

along the Mississippi River in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Because this group consists of four chapters that span across 260 miles of the Mississippi River, they are a wonderful model of how teamwork, energy and dedication can produce great results. The four chapters have pulled together to raise thousands of dollars and organize a variety of activities, including tree and shrub planting, an annual photography contest, and fishing events for children and adults with disabilities.

The Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuges served as strong advocates for the resources of the refuges and the National Wildlife Refuge System as a whole. Last year, the group's activities led to funding for the Environmental Management Program, designed to improve the ecological health of the Upper Mississippi River. George and Dorothy Hoffman, president and treasurer of the group, accepted the award. We are honored to recognize

the work of the Friends of the Upper Mississippi and congratulate their many successes.

Other Outstanding Volunteers

Bob Green, a volunteer at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge (UT), has contributed over 1,800 hours since 1995 to secure over forty water rights that are attached to existing and newly acquired refuge lands. The refuge water supply would be seriously jeopardized without Bob's legal knowledge and expertise.

Katie Sollohub dedicated many volunteer hours to St. Marks NWR (FL). Sollohub, a retired teacher, was honored with the Governor's Points of Light Award for her 13 years of service to the refuge. Governor Jeb Bush presented her with the award. Ms. Sollohub created an environmental education program that has reached hundreds of students.

Buenos Aires NWR (AZ) benefitted tremendously from the work of multi-talented volunteer *Bob*

Recognition of Outstanding Volunteers



St. Marks NWR (FL) volunteer, Katie Sollohub, being honored for her volunteer service by Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

Sargent. Bob's electrical skills, along with his passion for birding, were put to good use as he completed many electrical projects throughout the refuge. On weekends, he enlightens visitors with his knowledge of birds by leading walks in Brown Canyon.

Bald Knob NWR (AR) is grateful to have the support of volunteers *Kenny and LaDonna Nichols*. The Nichols' are a dynamic team that contribute tremendously to the refuge's biological program. They conducted daily shore and wading bird surveys, along with breeding bird surveys in late summer and early fall. Due to time and staff constraints, the refuge was unable to conduct these much needed surveys. However, thanks to the Nichols', this newly established refuge was provided with valuable baseline data.

Senior Master Sergeant Lloyd French, a volunteer for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, was nominated by the Northeast Regional Office (Hadley, MA) and received the Conservation Service Award from the Department of the Interior. Mr. French's efforts resulted in the acquisition and distribution of \$3.2 million worth of excess equipment to field stations nationwide.

Frederick Ruhe, a volunteer at the Chesapeake Bay Ecological Services Field Office (MD), provided extraordinary volunteer work on the Tuckahoe Fishway Monitoring Study. He collected data at the fishway and assisted biologists with other field operations. Mr. Ruhe is a conservation minded angler, and his understanding of the fish migration in Tuckahoe and adjoining watersheds was a valuable addition to the successful completion of the study.

As President of the Friends of Craig Brook, Inc. for the past two years, *Bob Ramsdell* has provided exemplary leadership in the organization of the Friends group and in their work of educating thousands of visitors about the watershed ecosystem approach. Bob's efforts are unflinching and constant in the Friends' sponsorship of the annual Penobscot River Festival and Spawning Spectacular. With his woodworking talent, Bob has produced many signs in support of educational outreach. He has seen the Friends group and the hatchery complex through a two-year

construction project, along with the opening of the new facilities.

Christina Manville, a volunteer with the Ecological Services Contaminants Regional Office (CO), helped compile the regional oil spill response plan. Due to heavy work loads by the staff, this very important document had not been completed. Christina's work enabled the region to comply with national requirements.

Bob Jennings, a college student majoring in political science (but passionate about amphibians), volunteers at the Sybille Research Unit of the Wyoming Ecological Field Office. Jennings assists with the hands-on care of Wyoming toads, which are currently being bred in captivity. He feeds and medicates the animals, cleans cages, conducts plumbing and electrical repairs, and transports animals to and from the reintroduction sites. Mr. Jennings assisted in the care and monitoring of reintroduced animals at Mortenson Lake NWR (WY) and took the lead in an amphibian study.



Bob Ramsdell, past President of the Friends of Craig Brook, Inc., receives a plaque from Outdoor Recreation Planner, Peter Steenstra, honoring him as Craig Brook National Fish Hatchery (ME) Volunteer of the Year.

Marsha Mustrall, Friends of Craig Brook, Inc.

Volunteers' Conservation Achievements

Wildlife

Marion and Russell Frobe contributed a total of 580 hours this year at *Turnbull NWR* (WA). This dedicated couple assisted biological staff with songbird point counts and waterfowl, marsh bird, MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival), and breeding bird surveys.

Mr. Kenneth Seyffert provides monthly bird counts to the *Buffalo Lake NWR* (TX). He has been visiting the refuge for over 37 years and is known for his bird identification skills and knowledge. The information he provides to the refuge is priceless!

Volunteers at *St. Marks NWR* (FL) donated 489 hours towards the Monarch Butterfly Migration Research Program. Volunteers educated visitors on the natural history of the monarch butterfly, and, thanks to the coordination and training efforts of lead volunteer Richard RuBino, 3,203 monarchs were counted and 1,553 were tagged.

At *Charles M. Russell NWR* (MT), volunteers assist with the black-footed ferret reintroduction program by conducting spotlight surveys and capturing wild-born ferret kits.

Volunteers at *Dexter NFH* (NM) designed and built water recirculating systems that are used to maintain and reproduce various endangered and threatened fish species.

Sandy Upson, a volunteer at *Leslie Canyon NWR* and *San Bernardino NWR* (AZ), is documenting the species richness of dragonflies and damselflies found on the refuges. A highlight of her study has been the finding of an endemic species on the refuge.



Marion and Russell Frobe, volunteers at Turnbull NWR (WA), remove a songbird from a mist net while conducting surveys on the refuge.

At *Tishomingo NFH* (OK), volunteers assisted in rearing and tagging over 10,000 paddlefish for re-establishing the population in the Red River of Texas and Oklahoma.

Volunteers at *Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Resources Office* (VT) monitored state listed Eastern spiny softshell turtles and conducted native mussel surveys in Vermont and New York. Also, they provided assistance with the Atlantic salmon fry stocking program for Lake Champlain.

Habitat

Volunteers at *Lacassine NWR* (LA) saved hundreds of native prairie plants from areas scheduled to be developed for urban expansion.

Volunteers at *Madison WMD* (SD) collected 170,000 flea beetles to be used for control of leafy spurge. Flea beetles were released on refuge and private lands.

Hakalau Forest NWR (HI) received assistance from 25 different weekend volunteer groups. Volunteers assisted with seed collection, tree nursery maintenance and tree planting. Volunteers planted a total of 21,555 native and endangered trees!

Mark Twain NWR (IA) developed a partnership with the U.S. Army Reserve Center in Muscatine, Iowa at the Wapello District. This partnership led to reservist volunteers donating over 700 hours towards restoring habitat and facilities.

People

Jamie Knoedler, a volunteer at *Wertheim NWR* (NY), assisted the refuge complex in developing a brochure entitled "Prescribed Fire on Long Island." Several agencies on Long Island used the brochure to garner public support for prescribed fire programs.

Volunteers' Conservation Achievements

Volunteers at *Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee NWR* (FL) organized the first annual Everglades Day Festival on the refuge, which included exhibits, tours, interpretive programs and entertainment. The event attracted over 3,000 people!

At *Piedmont NWR* (GA) 39 volunteers contributed 892 hours of service during the ninth annual deer hunt for participants in wheelchairs. Scout Troop 512 constructed three universally accessible platforms that were used during this event.

At *Seedskadee NWR* (WY), volunteers constructed and installed signs and brochure boxes at primary river access points to inform visitors of recreational opportunities.

Members of the North Platte Valley Sportsman's Association, in cooperation with *Crescent Lake NWR* (NE), used their own boats to take local children fishing as part of National Fishing Week.

Chincoteague NWR (VA) hosted several Elderhostels. The Elderhostel program provides retired and semi-retired seniors the opportunity to use their valuable skills and talents toward hands-on service projects. This year, participants removed a portion of the Marsh Trail dike and built an elevated boardwalk in its place. They planted trees and built several information kiosks on the refuge.

The *John H. Chafee NWR at Pettaquamscutt Cove* (RI) was dedicated to former Senator John H. Chafee in a beautiful ceremony on the Narrow River. Volunteers contributed by assisting with a variety of activities that made the day a memorable event for everyone.

Facilities

Pete Fisher, a volunteer at *Reelfoot NWR* (TN) and *Okefenokee NWR* (GA), has donated more than 10,000 hours! He stays busy keeping the refuges wild and beautiful by contributing towards reducing their many maintenance needs.

Volunteers at *Ruby Lake NWR* (NV) constructed two photo blinds with funds donated by the North American Nature Photography Association.

Six volunteers from various colleges provided support for the *Grays Lake NWR* (ID) grassland management study. Even though we like to consider volunteers as priceless, the value of their labor was estimated to be \$60,000!

Marina volunteer hosts at *Crab Orchard NWR* (IL) contributed over 3,000 hours maintaining the grounds and facilities so visitors had a safe and enjoyable visit.

The Western Wisconsin Technical College, Industrial Technologies Division volunteered their time to build a new bookstore for *Upper Mississippi River Wildlife & Fish Refuge/ La Crosse* (WI). The students and instructors contributed over 1,200 hours building and assembling the units. Funds for supplies were provided by a grant received from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Volunteers at *Black Bayou Lake NWR* (LA) supervised and participated in the renovation of a 100-year-old planters house, which will be used as an environmental education center.

Oliver Chapman, volunteer for the *Vermont LEO*, uses his mechanical skills to maintain government boats, motors, trailers, vehicles and other field equipment.

Innovative Approaches

For the past three summers, USFWS biologists at *Koyukuk/Nowitna NWR Complex* (AK) have invited environmental science students from the Universities of Tamaulipas and Chihuahua in Mexico to volunteer and assist with cooperative studies of white-fronted geese, which migrate across international borders. At the end of the summer, students returned to Mexico armed with new experiences, research materials and sufficient funding to begin their own wildlife studies. They helped inform wildlife professionals, other students and the public about the problems of declining geese and the methods used by the Service to study and conserve habitat in the United States. Ms. Fabiola Yopez, the first student volunteer to participate in the program, wrote back to her colleagues in the United States, “I hope that this student volunteer

program that began with me can continue giving opportunities to more Mexican students who day-to-day work towards the research and conservation of wildlife in our country.”

The Alpena FRO (MI) completed several projects this year with the aid of partners and volunteers. The highlight of the field season was the restoration of Hardwood Creek on the Black River Watershed. In September 2000, one plastic culvert was replaced with a 25 ft. long wooden box culvert made of Michigan grown red pine and assembled in Michigan. Eight federal, state and local partners contributed \$60,000 in funds, labor, materials and equipment to restoring this road and stream crossing. The restoration opened a fish passage to twelve river miles of brook trout spawning habitat.

Volunteers met for one year to plan and coordinate funding for this restoration project. Alpena FRO believes that utilizing volunteers is an excellent way to control costs on projects and the experience of volunteers is “extremely beneficial.”

Volunteers working with the Savannah NWR Friends Group of Savannah Coastal Refuges (GA) conceived the plan to partner with Savannah College of Art and Design to develop brief video advertisements for use as public service announcements by local TV stations. They coordinated production and distribution of the announcements, which are currently aired on three cable stations. The response to these videos has been overwhelming. They have generated interest in the refuges and support for Savannah NWR.



Volunteers from the Michigan United Conservation Club, Montmorency County Conservation Club and Thunder Bay River Watershed Restoration Committee assist Alpena FRO and other partners in bank stabilization at a bank erosion site on the Thunder Bay River in northeastern Michigan.

Challenges and Concerns

Each year the number of volunteers within the USFWS increases, despite the fact that many of the USFWS sites that have volunteer programs are understaffed and underfunded. This proves just how essential volunteers are to our mission. We will continue to work to improve the volunteer program at the station, regional and national levels. Recommendations are one example of how the USFWS facilitates program improvements. Annually, we ask field stations for recommendations on how to improve the volunteer program. Listed here are some frequent recommendations from field stations.

- Revise reporting procedures to accurately reflect all volunteer activities. Include fish hatcheries, ecological services offices and others.
- Increase funding to support volunteer programs (housing, equipment, awards, training, uniforms, vehicles, and supplies).
- Establish additional Volunteer Coordinator positions to keep pace with the rapidly growing volunteer programs.
- Schedule an annual Volunteer Coordinator Conference for all station, regional and national coordinators, as a way to ensure that current policy on managing volunteers is accurately distributed.
- Create a standardized award program throughout the NWRS to establish consistency in our appreciation of volunteer efforts.

Although managing a volunteer program can be challenging, the awards are endless!

Our Future

The future of the volunteer program depends on our commitment to investing in every volunteer. We must allow the programs to grow and adapt to the changes this brings. With shared vision and a common goal, our partners and volunteers help preserve wild places for future generations of Americans. As we approach the NWRS Centennial in 2003, volunteers and partners will play a pivotal role in celebrations and, more importantly, in preparing for our second century of conservation. With their help we face our future with a sense of accomplishment and excitement about what the future may hold.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Regional Contacts

Opportunities are available to contribute to the conservation of wildlife on national wildlife refuges, fish facilities, ecological services offices, and numerous other offices from Hawaii to Maine and from Alaska to Puerto Rico. The USFWS encompasses more than 93 million acres of wildlife habitat within its boundaries. The diversity of these habitats range from deserts in the southwest to urban wetlands in Philadelphia and from forests of the Pacific northwest to swamps in Georgia. We need volunteers for biological and archaeological inventories, outdoor recreation planning, population censusing, maintenance of habitats and facilities, natural resource planning, clerical assistance, environmental education, and public outreach.

For complete details, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at the office nearest you:

Region 1: CA, HI, ID, NV, OR, WA

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Eastside Federal Complex
Portland, OR 97232-4181
503/231 6177

Region 2: AZ, NM, OK, TX

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

Region 3: IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, MO, OH, WI

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 Federal Dr., Federal Building
Fort Snelling, MN 55111
612/713 5444

Region 4: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1875 Century Blvd., NW
Atlanta, GA 30345
404/679 7178

Region 5: CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT, VA, WV

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035
413/253 8303

Region 6: CO, KS, MT, NE, ND, SD, UT, WY

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Denver Federal Center
P.O. Box 25486
Denver, CO 80225
303/236 8145, x 606

Region 7: Alaska (AK)

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

Washington, D.C.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Headquarters National Wildlife
Refuge System
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 670
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U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://www.fws.gov>

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