

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



News Release

Midwest Region

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Fergus Falls Wetland Management District Manager Kevin Brennan Named 2008 Refuge Manager of the Year

Kevin Brennan, manager of the Fergus Falls (MN) Wetland Management District was honored as the National Wildlife Refuge Association's 2008 Refuge Manager of the Year at a ceremony held March 27 in Phoenix, Ariz.

Brennan was honored for his achievements during his 34 year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "I was somewhat overwhelmed to receive this award," said Brennan. "But, I also realize that I received this award thanks to the support of my family and all the dedicated and supportive people at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service I've had the pleasure of working with during my career."

As manager at the Fergus Falls WMD, Brennan manages 218 waterfowl production areas covering more than 44,000 acres in five counties. During his career Brennan has been able to permanently protect more than 17,000 acres of wetlands and grasslands in the Fergus Falls WMD area. "It is rewarding to think that we played some part in ensuring that future generations will have the opportunity to see a flight of ducks rise from a wetland and fly over native prairies," said Brennan.

In addition to protecting and managing habitat to preserve wildlife, Brennan has also made helping children share his love of wildlife a priority throughout his career. Brennan in cooperation with many local individuals helped establish the Fergus Falls Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. The Center is the Refuge System's only residential education facility and is home to the one-of-a-kind Prairie Science Class. The Prairie Science Class brings Fergus Falls School District students out on the landscape everyday and incorporates math, science and other studies into real world situations.

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A native of Hillsboro, N.D., Brennan graduated from the University of North Dakota with a B.S. degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. He began his career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Devils Lakes Wetland Management District. He also worked at Kirwin (KS), J. Clark Salyer (ND) and Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuges (NE) before moving to his current position at Fergus Falls in 1986.

Brennan says he's seen many positive changes in how waterfowl and wildlife are managed during his years with the USFWS. "The realization that private landowners can have such a positive impact on wildlife populations and water quality has been very significant," said Brennan. "We no longer just focus on individual parcels of land; we have to work at a landscape level."

Another significant change has been the understanding that natural processes are resilient. "When I started my career, if a wetland had been drained, we were discouraged from restoring and protecting it," said Brennan. "We now know that if you break a drain tile and properly treat and manage the surrounding uplands, a drained wetland basin and its associated uplands will have significant wildlife and ecological value again in just a few years."

Brennan says that because of what he's seen during his career, and what he sees in the faces of the children at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, he's both thankful for what the National Wildlife Refuge System has done and is optimistic about the future. "After 34 years I still love to get up in the morning and go to work; so I'm not planning to leave anytime soon," says Brennan. "But I also know that whenever I do decide to move onto my next challenge, the Prairie Pothole Region will be in good hands."

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.