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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Inside Region 3

November 29, 2004



Inside This Issue:

Eurasian Ruffe Range Continues to Expand
Three New Project Leaders Selected
A Spawning Success for Two Hatcheries

TSP Open Season: Oct. 15 – Dec. 31, 2004

The Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season is your chance to start or change the amount of your contributions to your TSP account. The following are open season highlights:

- Changes completed prior to Dec. 11, 2004 will take effect the first pay period in December (Dec. 12).
- FERS maximum contribution is increased to 15 percent.
- CSRS maximum contribution is increased to 10 percent.
- Contribution percent changes must be made via Employee Express at <http://employeeexpress.gov>
- Allocation changes must be made with the TSP Service Office.

Questions related to TSP should be directed to the Region 3 Human Resources Office at 612-713-5230.

About the cover:



- USFWS Photo

Biological Technician Land Mueller releases a wood duck hen from a net on Clarence Cannon NWR. The Service assisted the Missouri Department of Conservation with their duck banding effort. A total of 192 wood ducks were banded and released.

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: **Robert M. Grant**, Regional Office-Diversity and Civil Rights; **Cathy L. Vanatta**, Regional Office-Contracting and General Services; **Daniel J. Matiatos**, Big Oaks NWR; **Kathy Besser**, Regional Office-Human Resources.

We also welcome the following new term, temporary and student employees: **Christopher D. Pollentier**, Upper Miss NWFR-LaCrosse Dist.; **Katherine E. Brashear**, Necedah NWR; **Dustin R. Balson**, Horicon NWR; **John L. Caudel**, Mingo JCC.

We bid farewell and say thank you to the following retirees: **Dave W. Gustafson**, Regional Office-Contracting and General Services; **Bryce P. Shimmon**, Regional Office-Contracting and General Services; **Robert F. Bartels**, Law Enforcement-Onalaska; and, **Joseph W. Artmann**, Regional Office-Private Lands.

2005 WMI Touchstone and Presidents Awards

Nominations may now be submitted for the Wildlife Management Institute's 2005 Touchstone and Presidents awards, which recognize exceptional professional ingenuity and tenacity in effecting a particular program that, within the past several years, has notably advanced the cause or prospect of sound resource management. Nominations may be for programs in any natural resource discipline.

The Presidents Award honors a federal, state or provincial natural resource agency's division, department, office or program. The Touchstone Award recognizes the achievement of a natural resource management program, professional or group of professionals in the public or private sector.

Nominations for either award must include a letter that specifies: (1) the name and address of the nominee(s), (2) the name and address of the nominator(s), (3) a brief synopsis of the accomplishment, including its origin and dates, and (4) the names and phone numbers of three individuals other than the nominee(s) who can give independent testimony about the value, scope and other merits of the achievement.

Nominations for the 2005 Touchstone and Presidents awards — to be presented during the 70th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March 2005 in Arlington, Va. — must be submitted by December 15, 2004, to: WMI Awards, Wildlife Management Institute, 1146 19th St., NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036; via e-mail to rmccabe@wildlifemgt.org or via fax to 202-408-5059.

For more information about WMI's awards, go to the Institute's website at <http://www.wildlifemanagementinstitute.org>.

Three New Project Leaders Join the Region

Alice Hanley was selected as the new Project Leader for Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, in western Minnesota. Alice is currently the Deputy Project Leader at the Flint Hills/Marais des Cygnes NWR Complex in eastern Kansas. Alice is a graduate of the University of California-Davis and has significant Refuge and Wetland Management District experience. Some of her past stations include Sand Lake NWR Complex, Rainwater Basin WMD and Long Lake NWR Complex. In addition to her professional credentials, Alice brings a love for “prairie” systems and excellent people skills. She has had an array of experiences working with agricultural communities and will complement the current staff expertise at the refuge. Her tentative report date is Jan. 10, 2005.

Steve Kahl has been selected as Project Leader of Shiawassee NWR in Michigan. Steve is currently the Project Leader of Wallkill River NWR in New Jersey and will report to Shiawassee on Feb. 6. Steve has also worked at Iroquios and Montezuma NWRs in New York and has a Masters of Science Degree in Fish and Wildlife Biology from the State University of New York in Syracuse. He has experience in a wide range of resource issues, excellent communication skills, extensive experience working with partners on habitat projects and he will be a tremendous addition to an already first-rate staff at Shiawassee.

Barbara Boyle has been selected as Project Leader for Tamarac NWR in northwestern Minnesota. Barbara is currently the Deputy Project Leader at Region 4’s Southeast Louisiana Refuges Complex near Lacombe, La. Prior to this duty station, Barbara worked at Arctic NWR as both a refuge operations specialist and a wildlife biologist. In addition to her biological and management experience, Barbara has significant expertise in GIS and computer systems. She has a Bachelors Degree from the University of Georgia, and graduate level training from the University of Alaska. In addition to these professional skills, Barbara brings to Tamarac NWR excellent people skills and the ability to reach out to local communities. Barbara will be reporting to Tamarac NWR in early January 2005.

New Science Intranet Site

Region 3 has developed a new and evolving Science Excellence Initiative intranet site located at <http://region3.fws.gov/ScienceExcellenceInitiative>

The site was developed in response to the region’s continued commitment to scientific excellence and as a vehicle for communicating science-related information between the Department, our Headquarters and Regional Office, and the field.

Key features of the site include a functional directory of staff, facilities, and groups with specialized science expertise; a research agenda, including regional, ecosystem, and species-based priorities; information on biological landscape planning initiatives, including our Regional Resource Assessment Team and the National Ecological Assessment Team; recent policies and directives influencing our scientific work; and a variety of employee suggestions.

Any questions or comments can be directed to Teresa Woods at 612-713-5423 or Tom Magnuson at 612-713-5467.



Regional Director Robyn Thorson accepts a ceremonial deed for the first 2,300 acres of Glacial Ridge NWR from Ron Nargang (right), director the Minnesota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, during a ceremony held at the new refuge site on October 26.

The real deed was officially transferred at a ceremony earlier in the day held at Rydell NWR.

- USFWS Photo by Chuck Traxler

Ruffe Range Continues to Expand East in Lake Superior



- USFWS Photo

A Service biologist holds a Eurasian ruffe and other aquatic invasive species, discovered in Lake Superior's Marquette harbor (Michigan) on Oct. 6. This location is 68 miles east of the ruffe's last known location.

A fall aquatic invasive species survey conducted by the Ashland Fishery Resources Office detected the presence of Eurasian ruffe in Marquette harbor (Marquette, Mich.) on Lake Superior.

On Oct. 6, a 41-mm young-of-the-year ruffe was captured in a bottom trawl from a heavy boat slip adjacent to the power facility in lower Marquette harbor. This slip is one of five index transects in Marquette harbor established to monitor for presence and abundance of Eurasian ruffe and other aquatic invasive species. The discovery is 68 miles east of the Sturgeon River Sloughs, Keweenaw Waterway, which was the previous eastern boundary of the ruffe range along southern Lake Superior.

The ruffe, a member of the perch family, have a negative impact on yellow perch, and are very invasive. Ruffe spread rapidly eastward from the Duluth-Superior harbor reaching Ontonagon, Mich., in 1994. Thanks to the Ruffe Control Plan and unfavorable habitat, ruffe expansion stalled in Ontonagon, until ruffes were detected in the Keweenaw Waterway and Lake Michigan in 2002. *Gary Czypinski, Ashland FRO.*

Coasters Make a Run for the Border

Biologist Steve Redman from the Iron River National Fish Hatchery stocked coaster brook trout with assistance from personnel of the Grand Portage Tribal Resources Department in the Pigeon River.

The Pigeon River, a tributary to Lake Superior, is located on the U.S.-Canadian border. The river was stocked with 20,000 five-inch coaster brook trout reared at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery.

All fish were marked with oxytetracycline dye and a fin clip before stocking. These markings will allow biologists to monitor the status of the coasters in these habitats.

This multiple-year event, which is coordinated between the Grand Portage Indian Community and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was established to fulfill the rehabilitation plan for Lake Superior coaster brook trout.

The combined effort has led to



- USFWS Photo

Twenty thousand coaster brook trout were stocked in to the Pigeon River on the Minnesota-Canadian border as part of a joint project between the Grand Portage Indian Community and the Service to help restore coasters in the area.

continued monitoring of coaster brook trout status, distribution, movement, and the abundance of re-introduced fish.

In addition to the stocking effort,

the tribe has acquired additional land, performed stream habitat improvements, and removed barriers that would impact coaster recovery. *Steve Redman, Iron River NFH*

Good Planning and Volunteers Make Unique Hunts A Success

6th Annual Youth Hunt

On October 30-31, 2004, Rydell National Wildlife Refuge conducted its 6th annual deer hunt for youth ages 12 – 15. Although only four deer were harvested, all participants saw deer and were able to learn and explore the out-of-doors.

The Rydell youth hunt is a mentorship event, using the experience of adults and refuge staff to introduce youth to the outdoors, hunting equipment and to teach how hunting is used as a big game management tool. An adult mentor accompanied each youth during the hunt and during an advanced hunter education course held at the refuge in September. The Advanced Hunter Education workshop gave the hunters an education on hunting culture and history, biology of white-tailed deer, hunting techniques and an overview of outdoor ethics.

This year's hunt was coordinated



- USFWS photos by JuanCarlos Giese
Alex Blaine with mentor and Refuge Volunteer Tyler Blaine show the deer Alex harvested during the youth hunt.

with Ryan Bronson, Minnesota DNR Youth Recruitment Specialist. Applications being processed through the DNR's electronic licensing system. Sixteen youths participated in the hunt.

Refuge volunteers and members of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association were on hand to help with the various aspects of managing the hunt. The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association also provided the students with complimentary hunting gear.

Persons with Disabilities Hunt

White-tailed deer were also on the mind of 20 hunters during the 9th annual Rydell National Wildlife Refuge Annual Deer Hunt for Persons with Disabilities held October 14-16. The hunt was coordinated through Options-Interstate Resource Center for Independent Living in East Grand Forks, Minn., which generated funds, provided volunteers and meals each day, as well as door prizes for the hunters.

People with disabilities ranging from mobility impairment, to learning and degenerative nerve disorders, were able to participate in the hunt. The hunters used a wide range of adaptive equipment. Randall Anderson, a hunter with quadriplegia, used a wheelchair-mounted rifle, aimed mechanically by a sip-and-puff system that allowed him to take aim and pull the trigger. All hunters accessed their hunting stands and platforms with the aid of specially designed wheelchair accessible ATV trailers provided by the refuge.

The hunt began with a required check-in at the Visitor's Center



Rydell Refuge and Options Volunteer Mickey Kaiser (kneeling) with hunter Randall Anderson and his son show the deer Randall harvested from one of the Rydell NWR accessible deer stands.

and then the hunters went to their assigned hunting site. Specialized accessibility equipment such as portable hunting blinds, wheelchair accessible platforms, temporary screens, adaptive hunting equipment, as well as the accessible trail system, facilitated a safe and effective hunting environment on the refuge.

More than 30 volunteers, including Rydell NWR Friends members, Options staff, MN Deer Hunters Assn. members, and volunteers interested in aiding the hunting process, contributed over 1,200 hours of volunteer time. Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District Conservation Officer Brent Taylor answered law enforcement questions, while Refuge Operations Specialist JuanCarlos Giese, Maintenance Worker Jay Cuicci and Acting Refuge Manager Dave Bennett represented the refuge.

JuanCarlos Giese, Rydell NWR

Burying Beetle Grabs Kids Interest

During a special environmental education day centered around “the living soil,” close to 200 elementary school students and their teachers in Circleville, Ohio, were introduced to a little-known endangered species, the American burying beetle.

The 20-minute presentation began by grabbing everyone’s attention with two preserved specimens of these huge orange and black beetles in a glass case. A poster board with photos showing the plump, orange tinted larvae, the facial differences between an adult male and female beetle, and other interesting facts was used as a prop while the beetle’s unusual natural history was described.

The presentation covered topics that kept the kids’ attention: burying and eating dead bodies during the night, special saliva to remove fur and feathers, and regurgitation of flesh to feed up to 30 squirming larvae. With such graphic topics of conversation, it’s easy to see why a considerable amount of interest developed in these unique beetles.

Both the teachers and students came up with great questions such as: “how fast can they walk?” and “how do they survive the winter?”

The grand finale was a map which displayed the dramatic decline in their range since the 1980s. Several reasons for the population decline were explained, such as competition with an increasing number of larger scavengers (raccoons, etc.), and light pollution.

Only recently reintroduced to Ohio in 1998, the American burying beetle is a small, but important part of Ohio ecosystems.

The Reynoldsburg Field Office looks forward to presenting this



- Photo courtesy Karen Halley, Pickaway County Environmental Education Coordinator

Service Biologist Karyn Tremper describes the natural history of the American burying beetle.

program to more schools in Ohio to help spread the word about this amazing and endangered species.

Karyn Tremper, Reynoldsburg ES FO

Cub Scouts Help DeSoto Refuge Collect Native Prairie Seeds

Cub Scout Pack #365 visited DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri Valley, Iowa, on Oct. 23, all in the name of conservation. Eleven Cub Scouts and parents from the Harrison Elementary Public School in Omaha, Neb., weathered the blustery but sunny Saturday morning to help collect prairie wildflower seeds.

DeSoto NWR staffers Don Jorgensen and Dave Murcia, along with volunteer Jim Hartman, educated the enthusiastic scouts about grasslands in the

National Wildlife Refuge System including seed dispersal and the role of prescribed fire.

This “conservation in action” event helped the scouts earn their Scout conservation badges, as well as helping to sustain the refuge on hand seed source.

This is the second year the scouts have conducted a harvest.

Maximilian’s sunflower, gray-headed coneflower, and purple prairie clover were all harvested and will help restore native grasslands on DeSoto NWR. *Dave Murcia, DeSoto NWR*



- USFWS Photo

Cub Scouts help harvest native prairie seeds on DeSoto NWR. The seeds collected will help the refuge reestablish more native prairie and the work the scouts did will help them earn a conservation badge.

Around the Region



- USFWS Photo by Gary Tischer
Retired Service employee Harold Duebbert discusses duck decoy carving at Agassiz NWR's Refuge week celebration. Duebbert recently wrote a book on waterfowl hunting titled "Wildfowling in Dakota: 1873 - 1903."



Student volunteers learn fishery skills while assisting Horicon NWR Biological Technician Jon Krapfl with a fishery survey at Fox River NWR.



Interior Secretary Gale Norton visited Horicon NWR on Oct. 25 to meet with employees, volunteers and sporting groups.



- USFWS Photo by John Leonard
Eight surplus buffalo were transferred from Neal Smith NWR's herd to the Ho-Chunk Nation on Nov. 3. The animals will be added to Ho-Chunk's existing buffalo herd to increase its biological diversity.



- USFWS Photo by Bob Kavetsky
Local waterfowl hunters stopped hunting and helped place wild rice seed in Muskegon Lake on Nov. 6. The wild rice seeding is part of a Service Coastal Program project.



- USFWS Photo by Ralph Simmons
Student Intern Melissa Cheung transfers fish at Neosho NFH as part of her 12-week internship program.

Have a Photo or View You Would Like to Share?

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

Getting By With A Little Help From Our Friends

Tracy Roessner, Pendills Creek NFH and Angela Baran, Iron River NFH

This year's trout spawning season provided some challenges to Region 3 National Fish Hatcheries. With too many trout and not enough staff to handle all the work, a call for volunteers was sent out to Service employees, as well as local friends and sporting groups, to lend a hand. Iron River, Pendills Creek and Sullivan Creek hatcheries all report that the response was outstanding. After some training by hatchery staff, all the volunteers were able to jump in and complete the job. We asked Tracy Roessner from Pendills Creek to do some field reporting for us and get some thoughts from the volunteers who helped with the spawning.



"I came because you needed help."
- Tim Smigielski, Jordan River NFH



"It was fun. Its good to come out and play with the fish and I wanted to see what goes on. Everyone was well organized."

-Dave Bryson, Ecological Services, New York Field Office

Pendills Creek/Sullivan Creek Hatchery

The Pendills Creek/Sullivan Creek Hatchery staff would like to say thank you to all those who volunteered to come out and help us spawn our lake trout this year! This fall's spawning season would have been rough without you: **Dave Bryson**, Ecological Services, New York Field Office; **Jaime Pacheco**, Neosho NFH; **Tim Moore**, Mancelona, Mich; **Samantha Small**, Brimley, Mich; **Kelly Gribble**, Engadine, Mich; **Ron and Rebecca Knopic**, Minnesota Valley NWR; and, **Paul Haver**, **Tim Smigielski**, **Bob Peterson**, and **Denise Johnson** from Jordan River NFH. The staff would also like to thank Pendills Creek's Administrative Technician **Debbie Jones** and Volunteers **Matt Rinkus** and **Rachel Damico** for helping take care of the production fish at Pendills Creek while the rest of us were spawning at Sullivan Creek.

Iron River Hatchery

The staff at Iron River Hatchery would like to thank the following people for volunteering their time: **Neal Young**, Big Muddy NWR; **Donna Zanger**, Mark Twain NWR; **Linda Benson**, Minneapolis/St. Paul Wildlife Inspection Office; **Colby Wrasse**, Carterville FRO; **John and Denise Johnston** and **Wayne Talo**, Jordan River NFH; **Nick Starzl**, Genoa NFH; **Rick Nelson**, LaCrosse FHC; **Mary Soler**, Litchfield WMD; **Scott Sanders**, Marquette Biological Station; **Norman Nicholson**, **Don Cornue** and **Ron Gaare** from Trout Unlimited; and, **Sean and Patrick Charette** from Red Cliff Tribal Hatchery.



"I was just interested in checking it out, I had no idea this much work went into it."
- Tim Moore, Mancelona, Mich.



"I just came for the experience. Its better than fin clipping because I'm not just sitting there all day, I get to move around more"
- Samantha Small, Brimley, Mich.

Accomplishment Reports

The following accomplishments reports were processed between Oct. 15 and Nov. 15, 2004:

1. **Developing an Expert System for ESA Listing Actions**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
2. **External Affairs Provides RD Remarks for Important Bird Area Dedication**, *Rachel Levin, External Affairs*
3. **Independent Science Review of the Pallid Sturgeon Monitoring Program**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
4. **Columbia Fishery Office Biologist Interviewed for Natural Resource Conservation Class**, *Louise Mauldin, Columbia FRO*
5. **Flex Funds - FY2005 Request for Proposals**, *Thomas Magnuson, Ecological Services*
6. **Chequamegon Bay Surveyed for Coaster Brook Trout**, *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*
7. **U of MN Seminar - Research to Support Management of Urban Waterfowl Production Areas**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
8. **Horicon Marsh Sense of Place Projects for 2004**, *Molly Stoddard, Horicon NWR*
9. **Waterfowlers and Citizens Aid Muskegon River Watershed Assembly Project Final Wild Rice Planting**, *Bob Kavetsky, East Lansing FO*
10. **Muscatatuck Refuge Staffs Career Booth at National FFA Convention**, *Susan Knowles, Muscatatuck NWR*
11. **Muscatatuck Refuge Represents Service at Franklin College Internship Fair**, *Susan Knowles, Muscatatuck NWR*
12. **Region Assists with Sage-Grouse Petition Review**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
13. **Muscatatuck NWR Hosts Conservation Field Days**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
14. **Alpena Fishery Office Completes 2004 Mid-lake Lake Trout Survey**, *Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO*
15. **McCann and Palet Wetland Restoration Projects Completed**, *Ted Koehler, Ashland FRO*
16. **Muscatatuck NWR Participates in Conservation Day at the Indianapolis Zoo**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
17. **Muscatatuck NWR Hosts Public Lands Day Work Day**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
18. **Scouts Get Banded at Seney National Wildlife Refuge**, *Gregg Baldwin, Marquette Bio Station*
19. **Consensus Achieved on Consultations for a TFM Treatment to Comply with the Endangered Species Act**, *Gregg Baldwin, Marquette Bio Station*
20. **Youth Participate in Deer Management Hunt at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge**, *Juancarlos Giese, Rydell NWR*
21. **Coded Wire Tag Extraction**, *Adam Kowalski, Alpena FRO*
22. **Nature's Halloween Hike Held at Green Point**, *Becky Goche, Shawansee NWR*
23. **DCR Staff Attends Local Government Job and Internship Fair**, *Arlene White, ABA (DCR)*
24. **Region Participates in National USGS Coordination Meeting**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
25. **Stakeholder Meetings Help Educate Partners On St. Marys River Fishery**, *Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*
26. **Salmon Trout River Restoration Complete**, *Lee Newman, Ashland FRO*
27. **Region 3 Develops Science Excellence Initiative Intranet Web Site**, *Thomas Magnuson, Ecological Services*
28. **Great Lakes Region Wins Four Coastal Wetlands Grants**, *Michael Vanderford, Federal Aid*
29. **Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Study Wetlands Group Meets at Regional Data Exchange Conference**, *Bob Kavetsky, East Lansing FO*
30. **External Affairs Coordinates Glacial Ridge Refuge Dedication Ceremony**, *Scott Flaherty, External Affairs*
31. **Migratory Bird Stopover Group Makes Progress at Conserving Sites Under Coastal Program Agreement**, *Bob Kavetsky, East Lansing FO*
32. **Deputy Secretary of the Interior Steve Griles visits DeSoto Refuge**, *Cindy Myer, Desoto NWR*
33. **Secretary of Interior Gale Norton Visits Horicon National Wildlife Refuge**, *Diane Kitchen, Horicon NWR*
34. **Scouts Support "Conservation in Action" at DeSoto Refuge**, *James Murcia, Desoto NWR*
35. **Sixth Graders Learn About Aquatic Nuisance Species**, *Susan Wells, Alpena FRO*
36. **Coaster Go Local**, *Angela Baran, Iron River NFH*
37. **Fall Walleye Surveys with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission**, *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*
38. **Students Spend Day Working On Squaw Creek Refuge**, *Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR*
39. **Survey Conducted to Assess Goby Predation on Lake Trout Eggs**, *Anjanette Bowen, Alpena FRO*
40. **Environmental Site Assessment on the New Glacial Ridge NWR**, *Jane Lardy-Nelson, Refuges&Wildlife*
41. **Missouri River Natural Resources Committee**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
42. **Pallid Sturgeon Stocked in the Missouri River**, *Tracy Hill, Columbia FRO*
43. **Disability Mentoring Day Job Fair**, *Peggy Nelson, ABA (DCR)*
44. **Lake Whitefish Tagging Station Built to Facilitate Lake Huron Study**, *Scott Koproski, Alpena FRO*
45. **Low Head Dam Removal in Petoskey Michigan Adds Three Miles of Trout Habitat**, *Susan Wells, Alpena FRO*
46. **Habitat Project Completed On DeSoto Lake**, *Cindy Myer, Desoto NWR*
47. **FWS/USGS/U of MN Graduate Seminar on Rapid Urbanization of St. Croix Wetland Management District**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
48. **USGS Northern Prairie Station Review**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
49. **Service Biologist Gives Presentation at CLC SCAA Workshop**, *Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO*
50. **Michigan Stream Team Held First Workshop**, *Heather Enterline, Alpena FRO*
51. **Extra Help Spawning at the Iron River Hatchery**, *Richard Nelson, LaCrosse Fish Health Center*
52. **National Wildlife Refuge Week - Squaw Creek Refuge**, *Ron Bell, Squaw Creek NWR*
53. **Genoa Hatchery Works the Circuit to Bring Walleye Back to the River**, *Doug Aloisi, Genoa NFH*
54. **Ninth Annual Rydell Refuge Deer Hunt for People With Disabilities Held**, *Juancarlos Giese, Rydell NWR*
55. **Refuge Week at Horicon a Success**, *Molly Stoddard, Horicon NWR*
56. **Muscatatuck NWR Boy Scouts Hold Service Day**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
57. **Genoa Hatchery Helps Celebrate 80th Birthday of Upper Mississippi River Refuge**, *Tony Brady, Genoa NFH*
58. **Big Muddy Takes Action on Refuge Week**, *Tim Haller, Big Muddy NWR*
59. **Muscatatuck NWR Hosts Refuge Week**, *Donna Stanley, Muscatatuck NWR*
60. **Assistant Secretary Visits Wisconsin and Michigan**, *Georgia Parham, External Affairs*
61. **Port Louisa Refuge - Keithsburg Unit Fish Survey Field Work Completed**, *Andrew Starostka, Columbia FRO*
62. **It Was a Dark and Stormy Night**, *Molly Mehl, Necedah NWR*
63. **New Low Water Crossing to Benefit Niangua Darter Completed**, *Joanne Grady, Columbia FRO*
64. **Students Meet Endangered Beetle Face to Face**, *Karyn Tremper, Reynoldsburg FO*
65. **First Public Scoping Meeting Held For Patoka River Refuge Conservation Plan**, *Jane Lardy-Nelson, Refuges&Wildlife*
66. **Policy Analysis and Science Assistance Program Advisory Committee Meeting**, *Thomas Magnuson, Ecological Services*
67. **Missouri River Briefings Meeting**, *Jennifer Johnson, Columbia FRO*
68. **Coasters on the Border**, *Steve Redman, Iron River NFH*
69. **Career Day - Gardner Elementary School**, *Tameka Dandridge, East Lansing FO*
70. **2004 Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival**, *Aaron Woldt, Alpena FRO*
71. **Agassiz Refuge Staff Assist FEMA in Hurricane Ivan Aftermath**, *Margaret Anderson, Agassiz NWR*
72. **Indiana Refuges Participate in Sesquicentennial Parade**, *Jason Lewis, Big Oaks NWR*
73. **"Ding" Darling Day Held at Neal Smith Refuge**, *Scott Ford, Neal Smith NWR*
74. **Partnering with University of Minnesota**, *Teresa Woods, Ecosystem Special Assistant*
75. **Service Partners with States on Missouri River Mitigation Program**, *Louise Mauldin, Columbia FRO*
76. **Ruffe Range Expands 110 Km in Lake Superior**, *Gary Czynski, Ashland FRO*
77. **Iron River Hatchery Gets By With a Little Help From Its Friends**, *Angela Baran, Iron River NFH*
78. **Rydell Refuge 2004 Walleye Production Stocking Totals**, *Heidi Keuler, LaCrosse FRO*
79. **Young-of-year Asian Carp Captured in Missouri River Scour Hole**, *Andrew Starostka, Columbia FRO*
80. **Iron River Hatchery Construction Almost There**, *Angela Baran, Iron River NFH*
81. **Another Year of Wood Duck Banding at Clarence Cannon Refuge Complete**, *Candace Chambers, Great River NWR*

Family Ties

Our assignments and priorities are directed to natural resources, but sometimes work nicely brushes up against our personal lives. This past month I noticed this on two separate occasions.

The first encounter was during a visit to the Bloomington Ecological Services field office. I had heard about their good work in Indiana and had previously met Project Leader Scott Pruitt, but this was my first chance to meet the rest of the BFO team in person.

In the course of each BFO employee sharing their projects, Andy King, an endangered species biologist, talked about his study of bats on the Indiana Army Ammunition Plant (INAAP), a Department of Defense industrial facility in Clark County along the Ohio River. Operations at the site have been shut down since 1971 and public access is restricted, so much of the former farmland has become woodlands and young forest, some of the best wildlife habitat left in the county – including habitat for bats. Andy off-handedly mentioned that his assignment on the INAAP site allowed access to restricted areas where he has family connections. I later asked him to share more about this intriguing comment.

Andy told me about his grandparent's, George and Rachel King, who married in 1940 and purchased a farm in Clark County. With the outbreak of WWII the King's farm, their local church, and most of the surrounding rural community were seized by the government for a Powder Plant (as the locals refer to the INAAP site) to supply the U.S. military. So Andy's grandparents relocated to a farm 3 miles away (his grand-

mother, age 88, still resides there). Andy's parents live on one corner of the King farm, and Andy grew up there. Andy now lives 2 hours away in Bloomington, but when he did his bat surveys at INAAP for 2 months in 2004 he was back at his boyhood home, and was accessing property where his grandparents originally settled.

Andy's family ties to his work at INAAP don't end there. His great-grandparents are buried in the old Union Church cemetery on the INAAP site (his great-grandmother worked at the Powder Plant sewing gun powder bags). Andy's work on the restricted INAAP grounds provided access to the gravesites of his great-grandparents. Andy is proud of his family connections to this site, and he's proud of the work he's doing there. I think his ancestors would be pretty proud of Andy.

I had my own family ties with work this past month, when I traveled to Polk County, in northwest Minnesota, to accept the first deed transferring land for the Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge. What a grand day! The weather cooperated, and the many local citizens and dignitaries shared enthusiastically in the celebration of this precious part of Minnesota's prairie landscape.

As it turns out, that part of the world figures in my own family's history. My grandparents, Axel and Anna Nyberg Thorson, settled a farm in eastern Polk County in the 1880s and raised 8 children there. My dad, the youngest boy, graduated from Fosston High School, a few miles down Highway 2 from Glacial Ridge. After returning briefly to the farm after U.S. Army service in World War



- USFWS Photo

Regional Director Robyn Thorson met with refuge volunteers and local residents at a new refuge that is located near her father's childhood home.

II, my dad struck out on his own, following Highway 2 all the way west to the Seattle area where he married and raised a family. But he stayed in close touch with Polk County, subscribing to the township newspaper, and just about every autumn he'd say (in a Minnesota accent that he never lost), "I think I'll head home for a while." The prairie of northwest Minnesota was always home in his heart.

As I said in my closing remarks to the assembled audience for the Glacial Ridge event, "As an employee of the Fish and Wildlife Service, permanently conserving the natural heritage of Polk County is a great moment in my career – and as a daughter and a granddaughter, it is a great moment in my life."

Many employees in Region 3 have roots in the Midwest that run deep, sometimes through several generations. Our important work in conservation honors our natural resource heritage. Sometimes it also honors family heritage, and makes us doubly proud.

**- Regional Director
Robyn Thorson**