

Inside Region 3

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Minnesota Valley NWR Receives National Park Partnership Award

Minnesota Valley NWR was recently recognized nationally for its innovative environmental education partnership efforts. The Minnesota Refuge earned the Education Award at the annual National Park Partnership Awards April 24, in Washington, D.C. The Education Award was presented to the Refuge for its partnership with Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRRA). Focus of the partnership is the "Big River Journey" program that connects Minneapolis/St. Paul area students with the science and heritage of the Mississippi River and its watershed, building a foundation of river stewardship.

In addition to Education Awards, National Park Partnership awards are presented for Environmental Conservation, Historic Preservation and Recreation. "Big River Journey" is a set of educational boat trips on the Mississippi River between Harriet Island in St. Paul and Ft. Snelling State Park, at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers. Paddleford Packet Boat Company provides the river transportation.

Targeted at grade levels 4-6, these programs include pre and post classroom activities, and supported with a teacher's guide of resource and curricula materials. Big River Journey provides access to a diverse student audience by recruiting under-served groups and by providing scholarships that support participation. This program exemplifies the importance of hands-on experiences in education, which stimulate curiosity and inspire children to learn more.

Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR



--USFWS Photo by Rick Julian

First Class Tour. A partner funded eight passenger cart is enhancing the Refuge experience for persons with disabilities visiting Rydell National Wildlife Refuge.

Cart Expands Refuge Experience For Visitors With Reduced Mobility

Thanks to the Friends of Rydell Association, the refuge now has a new tool to provide access to the trail system for people with limited mobility. A new eight passenger cart is now providing guided tours to larger groups of visitors on the trail system.

The \$8,000 cart was purchased through donations from local businesses and non-profit groups, according to Friends of Rydell President Bill Roeszler. "We're thankful to all the individuals and organization who provided funds for the cart. The VFW in Crookston, Minn., and the American Legion in Erskine, Minn., were large supporters."

Visitors have already taken advantage of the new tool to see the Refuge. Over a recent weekend, 35 persons affiliated

with Options: Resource Center for independent Living in East Grand Forks, visited the Refuge and were escorted on tours of the Refuge trail system. The cart greatly expands the Refuge's ability to provide tours to larger groups, especially families.

Volunteer Ion Iverson, a tour guide with over 3,500 hours of volunteer time at Rydell NWR, said being able to carry just four visitors, a normal car load, is a great benefit. "It was always difficult to have to leave one person behind when using the four passenger carts when we did not have enough volunteer to drive another cart. Many times we also have groups from nursing homes come out, and this cart will allow us to provide tours for those larger groups also!"

Coastal Program Accomplishments Presented at EMAP Symposium

Fish and wildlife habitat restorations on the Great Lakes and other projects sponsored by the Service's Coastal Program were presented to a national audience of coastal biologist and other experts during the four-day Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP) Coastal Symposium April 24-27 in Pensacola, Fla. Bob Kavetsky of the East Lansing Field Office presented a poster

presentation of accomplishments and future project plans funded through the Service's Coastal Program. The poster was co-authored by Frank Stone of the Ashland Fishery Resources Office.

Great Lakes biologists and managers were just a few of the 350 participants from the 24-state coastal community, providing Great Lakes' biologists with a large, new audience and source of infor-

mation exchange. The symposium provided a great opportunity to explain the exciting prospects of the habitat restorations and other projects conducted with Service Coastal Program funding. The group emphasized the added value of the Coastal Program in leveraging funding from other partners, as well as benefits to the ecosystem and often forgotten minority natural resource users.

The EMAP Coastal Symposium 2001 is a four day symposium, jointly sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Office of Research and Development and the Council of State Governments (CSG). The symposium is a forum to present and discuss the results of successful programs and develop new partnerships among federal, state, tribal, and academic scientists and managers to advance the science of monitoring and assessment of coastal resources. *Bob Kavetsky, East Lansing FO*

Personnel Presentation Information Now Available on Region's Intranet

Information presented during Personnel division's periodic briefings and training sessions is now available on the Intranet. Information provided during project leader meetings, Regional Office Lunch and Learn sessions, etc. potentially benefit all employees and can now be downloaded from the Intranet site.

The presentations often utilize Corel Presentations software to provide the outline and most salient items of information. Personnel has sent up an Intranet site on the Region 3 Intranet Home page with links to a all of Personnel's presentation slide shows.

Currently, two presentations are available: "Managing Employee Performance" and "Conduct and Retirement Calculations." The presentations can be viewed on the intranet at: <http://r3ftp.fws.gov/aba/pm/slides/default.htm>

Robb Morin, ABA (Personnel)



--USFWS Photo

Joya Szalwinski, park ranger at Upper Mississippi River NW&FR, leads 90 Winona-area students through introductions at the start of the satellite broadcast.

Students Learn About Migratory Birds Via Service's Interactive Television Broadcast

Ninety students from southeast Minnesota learned about migratory birds and bird habitats the the efforts of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical Campus in Winona, Minn.

Refuge staff coordinated and facilitated a 90-minute interactive television broadcast for 72 students from Bluffview Montessori School and 18 students from Riverway Learning Community April 26. Minnesota State's Southeast Technical Campus

provided the satellite downlink, telephone and fax machine that allowed students to engage in live, "on-air" question and answer sessions.

Students from these two local elementary schools obtained a national identity when questions submitted from both schools were broadcast.

Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical, along with Winona State University have both expressed continued support of future broadcasts. *Cynthia Samples, Upper Mississippi River NW&FR-Complex HQ*

Minnesota Artists Celebrate Junior Duck Stamp Winners

More than 500 guests helped celebrate the talents of 100 winners of this year's Minnesota Junior Duck Stamp Program during a ceremony May 5 at the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minn. Special honors and awards went to Aremy McCann, this year's national Junior Duck Stamp winner and Bonnie Latham, 2000 National winner. In addition, special guests included Becky Latham, who placed second in the 1999 National competition, and Sara Stack, who placed second in the 1998 National Competition.

Guests speakers included June Berwald, National Society of Collectors of Duck Stamps, John Christian, Region 3, Assistant Regional Director of Migratory Birds and State Programs, and Lance Ness, Board Member of Minnesota Waterfowl Association. Program



Aremy McCann's winner: a trumpeter swan.

Coordinator Judie Miller, of the Minnesota Valley NWR hosted the event and presented a review of the year's Junior Duck Stamp activities. The young artists were entertained by musician and ventriloquist, David Malmberg.

Each young artist's painting was projected on a large screen as they were

presented a ribbon by Shirley Hunt Alexander; Friends of Minnesota Valley. Additionally, a current Junior Duck Stamp, a Junior Duck Poster with the names of all 100 winners and pictures of the top 12 paintings, and art supplies (paint, art paper, brushes) for awards. The event was made possible through the efforts of 20 volunteers and 27 contributors.

Partners in the event included Minnesota Waterfowl Association; Green Isle Sportsmens Club; Banta Corporation; Hilton Hotels; Knott's Camp Snoopy; US ART Magazine; Wildlife Art Magazine; Art Barbarians; POSTMARK America; Friends of Minnesota Valley; Jim and Dorothy Hautman; Bob Hautman and various art suppliers. *Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR*

Resort Owners Tour Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

More than 40 resort owners from Otter Tail County in northwest Minnesota toured the Service's Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) April 27 to learn about expanded recreational opportunities for resort guests. The tour included presentations by the Fergus Falls Chamber of Commerce, the Fergus Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Otter Tail Historical Society and Fergus Falls Center for the Arts.

The PWLC is offering a series of programs this summer that are of particular interest to resort owners, including Family Prairie Walks every Saturday, Kids on the Prairie every Thursday morning, and several special events. All the programs are free, and resort owners were excited to be able to offer these activities to their guests.

The PWLC mails a monthly program update to all area resorts throughout the tourist season in order to encourage guests to visit the Center and discover the magic of the prairie pothole region. *Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC*

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Recognizes Value of Volunteers

Staff at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) in Fergus Falls, Minn., recognized the efforts of more than 50 volunteers at its annual Volunteer Banquet April 27, 2001. So far in fiscal year 2001, the Learning Center has benefitted from more than 1,200 hours of donated time.

Three volunteers were recognized for their significant contributions to the Center: Julie Erlandson, for her work on programs, the Friends Board of Directors and the Friends Newsletter; Allegra Anderson for her work in programs, the Friends Board and with the Bluestem Store; and John Lindholm, the Friends current president, for his work with the Board of Directors and establishing the Bluestem Store. Certificates and momentos were presented to all volunteers in appreciation for their efforts. The evening included a 'South-



west Fiesta Dinner' prepared and served by the PWLC staff, and a live animal program presented by the Chahinkapa Zoo of Wahpeton, ND. Several volunteers have since expressed appreciation for the event, and cited the staff as always being friendly and available to assist, train and encourage their efforts.

The Learning Center's volunteers range from junior highschool students to senior citizens, and assist with a variety of Center projects. Significant hours were contributed in environmental education programs, prairie restoration and the Friends Bluestem Store. *Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC*



Bob Hiltner helps sort lumber for blue bird boxes for Rydell's Blue Bird nest box building program April 22.

More Than 100 Brave Weather to Build Bluebird Nest Boxes at Rydell NWR

Despite snow and light rain at Rydell NWR, more than 100 hardy souls attended the Refuge's annual Earth Day bluebird information and nest box building program April 22. The Earth Day program is sponsored annually by the Friends of Rydell Refuge Association. Rydell staff and volunteers cut out the box parts and make several hundred kits for the program. Prior to the box construction activities, visitors view a video

program on the life history of bluebirds and placement of boxes. Participants were then provided with kits to construct a blue bird house free of charge. Volunteers assisted in the construction process. This year Dynamic Homes of Detroit Lakes, Minn., donated lumber for the construction of over 200 boxes. Funds for the hardware were provided through donations to the Rydell Friends Association. *Rick Julian, Rydell NWR*

Service Waterfowl, Refuge Programs Part of Duck Unlimited's Greenwing Fair

The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC) staff participated in the Fergus Falls Chapter of Ducks Unlimited Annual Greenwing event for youth April 28.

Over 500 youth registered for the Greenwing, along with many parents who accompanied their children. The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center staff distributed over 350 brochures on events and Service programs. The PWLC booth included a matching game on waterfowl, a wingboard to aid in duck identification and the Region 3 NWRS Centennial Display.

Many youth and adults tested their skills and knowledge, as well as picking up literature on PWLC events and the Refuge System. *Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC*

Ashland FRO Assists Tribes With Spring Walleye Surveys

The Ashland FRO recently assisted the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission with several walleye population surveys to estimate spawning populations of adult walleye in lakes of northern Wisconsin. These adult population estimates are used to set safe harvest levels, on which tribal harvest quotas are based.

This year's assessment activity was assigned to Frank Stone who conducted surveys on five lakes over a two-week period. The sampling occurred at night, when spawning activity and opportunities to collect fish are maximized. Normally, two-to three nights of fish collection are needed on each lake to obtain sufficient data. *Frank Stone, Ashland FRO*

Mississippi River Flooding Welcomed at Clarence Cannon NWR

Spring flooding along the Mississippi River is testing a new flood plain management strategy at the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, located 40 miles north of St. Louis. Prior to 1993, the 3,750-acre Refuge was surrounded by a 10 mile levee which was topped or breached by several floods. The floods repeatedly caused expensive damage to the Refuge's infrastructure of roads, dikes and water control structures.

After flooding in 1993 tore 16 holes in the levee, managers decided to try a new approach to manage this flood plain Refuge. An 800 foot-long rock spillway was constructed in a portion

of the levee that allows the Refuge to flood gradually as the river level exceeds a predetermined elevation. Gradual flooding provides several benefits. First, the more gradual flooding greatly reduces the damage that occurs to refuge facilities. Second, planned flooding allows the 3,750 acres of public land to provide temporary storage of rising flood waters, thereby reducing the effects of flooding further downriver. Finally, flooding benefits the many species of wildlife, including numerous fish species, that depend on periodic flooding for certain stages of their life cycles.

This year, flooding began April 24. Rising floodwaters crossed the spillway. Water levels on the Refuge continued to rise until the river crested April 29. Once the flooding has passed, the annual cycle of habitat management on the Refuge will resume. Large numbers of shorebirds and wading birds, such as herons and egrets, were observed on the refuge following two previous floods over the levee spillway. The increase in birds was due to the tremendous increase in food that promoted by the flooded conditions. Similar benefits are expected this year. *Dave Ellis, Great River NWR*

Congressional Staff Learn Refuge Issues During Visit to Clarence Cannon NWR

Staff at Clarence Cannon NWR recently hosted staff members of Missouri Congressman Kenny Hulshof. Eric Feltner, district director; Scott Calicutt, Hannibal, Mo., district office and Gina Abington, Washington, Mo., district office visited the Refuge April 27.

The group familiarized themselves with the Refuge and Mark Twain Refuges issues, priorities and concerns along the Mississippi River. Project Leader Steinbach and Refuge Manager Dave Ellis discussed the status and purpose of the Refuge's comprehensive conservation plan, land acquisition issues, Refuge management programs, public use issues, and the upcoming National Wildlife Refuge System centennial.

The visit coincided with flooding on the Mississippi River; with floodwaters were entering the Cannon Refuge over the spillway. A visit to the spillway provided an excellent opportunity to discuss flood plain management issues. The staff members expressed a desire to have the Congressman Hulshof visit the refuge, possibly during fall waterfowl migration. *Dave Ellis, Great River NWR*

Conservation Agencies Join Bird Interests to Review Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative

The Service's Columbia Ecological Services Field Office and Missouri Department of Conservation hosted an organizational meeting of the Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative (MOBCI) April 21 in Columbia, Mo. About 50 representatives of 17 non-governmental organizations and nine state and federal agencies met to discuss bird conservation in Missouri.

The effort is a step down from the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI), which seeks to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation through regionally based, biologically driven, landscape-oriented partnerships. Amy Salveter of the Columbia Field Office and Barbara Moran, Big Muddy NWR, represented the Service during the meeting.

The morning was spent sharing information about organizations and bird conservation activities and discussing the challenges to bird conservation in Missouri. During the afternoon session the group agreed to pursue MOBCI and appointed a steering committee to develop the next meeting and to edit the draft vision, goals, and objectives for the

initiative.

MOBCI provides a platform for all partners interested in bird conservation (including game and non-game species) to work together to assess the status of birds and their habitats, and to coordinate their conservation.

Partners attending the meeting included the Conservation Federation of Missouri; Webster Groves Nature Study Society; Greater Ozarks Audubon Society; Audubon Society of Missouri; Partners in Flight; Ruffed Grouse Society; Ozark Center for Wildlife Research; St. Louis Audubon Society; Missouri Prairie Foundation; Missouri Falconers; Quail Unlimited; The Nature Conservancy of Missouri; National Wild Turkey Federation; Endangered Species Coalition; Missouri Farmers Union; Missouri Agriculture Industries; Missouri Departments of Conservation, Transportation, Natural Resources and Agriculture; Missouri National Guard; University of Missouri; USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Barbara Moran, Big Muddy NWR

Service's Wolf Reclassification Proposal Presented at Midwest Wolf Stewards Meeting in Wisconsin

Federal, tribal, and state agencies, along with private conservation organizations and interested individuals met April 11-12, in Cable, Wis., to discuss gray wolf issues in the Midwest. Recovery status reports were presented by Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Ron Refsnider described the status of the federal (Service) reclassification proposal.

Other presentations covered wolf research on Isle Royale, on and off reservation wolf management (by Bad River Tribe and GLIFWC, respectively), and the federal wolf depredation control program in Minnesota.

The evening speaker was Sonya Grewal, member of a team of Canadian researchers that is investigating wolf genetics and the evolutionary relationships of red and gray wolves. Sixty-four people attended the meeting. The Service provided financial



Gray wolf.

--Photo by Scott Flaherty

assistance to assist in speaker travel to the meeting. The International Wolf Center offered to host next year's gathering, which will probably be held in Duluth, Minn.

After the close of the wolf meeting, many attendees remained for the initial meeting of the "Midwest Car-

nivore Committee," organized by the U.S. Forest Service. The committee established a steering committee, selected several species to be the focus of attention, discussed geographic scope, and membership issues. The committee is being modelled after the Western Forest Carnivore Committee, which has been instrumental in dealing with many carnivore issues in the West.

Partners and organizations attending the wolf meeting included: Forest Service; GLIFWC; Bad River Tribe; Keweenaw Bay Reservation; Wildlife Services, USDA; Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan Departments of Natural Resources; National Park Service; USGS/Biological Resources Division; Timber Wolf Alliance; International Wolf Center; Minnesota Wolf Alliance; Defenders of Wildlife; Humane Society; Help Our Wolves Live and National Wildlife Federation. *Ron Refsnider, Ecological Services*

Service Joins Hunt For Massasauga Rattlesnakes in Ohio

Service Biologists Megan Sullivan and Angela Boyer of the Service's Reynoldsburg Field Office joined a team of snake hunters April 24, to search Ohio's Killdeer Plains State Wildlife Area for the elusive Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, a federal candidate species and state endangered species in Ohio.

Snake specialist Doug Wynn of Westerville North High School, prepared and organized snakehunters who will assist in the survey. Personnel from the Reynoldsburg Field Office, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Columbus Zoo, Cincinnati Zoo, and students from Westerville North High School will be participating in the survey during the next several months.

Three massasaugas were lo-

cated and captured on the first day of the survey at locations where tin had been placed. Seven other snake species were also found. Mr. Wynn will implant pit tags in the massasaugas and sex, measure, and weigh them before releasing them.

Later this spring, and for the next two years, four selected massasaugas will be implanted with radiotransmitters and tracked until fall ingress. These snakes will be located every three days, the sites will be examined, and the plant associations will be quantified. The data will allow the Service to gain detailed information on high quality massasauga habitats, use of select microhabitats including crayfish burrows, site fidelity, movement patterns, and migratory distance from den sites.

Concurrent with the massasauga study, Ohio Department of Natural Resources will also be surveying for Eastern plains garter snakes, a state endangered species.

The plains garter snake survey will quantify overall population size, locate distinct populations, and assess habitat. Killdeer Plains State Wildlife Area is located in Wyandot County in central Ohio, and features a matrix of prairie, wetland, scrub, and grassland habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife.

Partners in the project include the Westerville North High School, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Columbus Zoo and Cleveland Zoo. *Megan Sullivan, Reynoldsburg Field Office*

Accomplishment Reports Received

The following accomplishment reports were processed by the ARS from April 19 to May 7, 2001.

1 Minnesota Celebrates its National Winning Artists

Judith Miller, Minnesota Valley NWR

2 Ashland FRO Assists Tribes With Spring Walleye Surveys

Frank Stone, Ashland FRO

3 Service Waterfowl, Refuge Programs Part of Duck Unlimited's Greenwing Fair

Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

4 Prairie Wetlands Learning Center Recognizes Value of Volunteers

Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

5 New Electric Cart Expands Rydell Refuge Experience For Visitors With Limited Mobility

rick julian, Rydell NWR

6 Resort Owners Tour Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

Kenneth Garrahan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

7 Personnel Training Sessions Now Available on Intranet

Robb Morin, ABA (Personnel)

8 Personnel Assists Biological Science Technicians for Private Lands Projects

Robb Morin, ABA (Personnel)

9 Presentation Given to Fergus Falls Community College Students about Wildlife Careers

Kevin Brennan, Fergus Falls WMD/PWLC

10. Missouri Congressional Staff Learn Refuge Issues During Visit to Clarence Cannon NWR

Dave Ellis, Great River NWR

11. Service Joins Careers Panel Discussion at University of Illinois

Shawn Cirtan, Bloomington FO

12. Mississippi River Flooding Welcomed at Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge

Dave Ellis, Great River NWR

13. Great Lakes' Biologists Present Coastal Program Accomplishments at EMAP 2001 Symposium

Bob Kavetsky, East Lansing FO

14. Bloomington Field Office Assists With Girl Scout's Wildlife Workshop

Michael Litwin, Bloomington FO

15. Hunting for the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes at Ohio's Killdeer Plains

Megan Sullivan, Reynoldsburg FO

16. Reynoldsburg Staff Promotes Conservation During Earth Day Program

Megan Sullivan, Reynoldsburg FO

17. Minnesota Valley NWR Receives National Park Partnership Award

Scott Ford, Minnesota Valley NWR

18. Special Agent interviewed for New Animal Planet Television Program

Ed Spoon, Madison LE

19. Maintenance Workshop Close Out

Robb Morin, ABA (Personnel)

20. Retirement Calculations - Lunch and Learn Presentations

Robb Morin, ABA (Personnel)

21. Conservation Agencies Join Bird Interests to Review Missouri Bird Conservation Initiative

Barbara Moran, Big Muddy NWR

22. Corps of Engineers, University of Missouri Discuss Partnership for Monitoring

Barbara Moran, Big Muddy NWR

23. St. Louis Audubon Society Learns About Nearby Refuges

Barbara Moran, Big Muddy NWR

24. Services' Hands-On Contributions Benefit Student "Ramp in the Swamp"

Mark Steingraeber, LaCrosse FRO

25. Southeast Minnesota Student Learn About Migratory Birds Via Interactive TV Broadcast

Cynthia Samples, UMRNW&FR-Complex HQ

26. Service Participates in Midwest Wolf Stewards Meeting in Wisconsin

Ron Refsnider, Ecological Services

27. Rydell NWR Hosts Group Promoting "Watching Wildlife" Tour

Rick Julian, Rydell NWR

28. High Spring Run Off Impact Refuge Road and Trail System

Rick Julian, Rydell NWR

29. More Than 100 Brave Weather to Build Bluebird Nest Boxes at Rydell NWR

Rick Julian, Rydell NWR

30. Flooding on the Upper Miss

Cynthia Samples, UMRNW&FR-Complex HQ

Inside Region 3



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