

Wings

Newsletter for Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges

Vol. XIII No. 1 March, 2006

Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Honor Volunteers

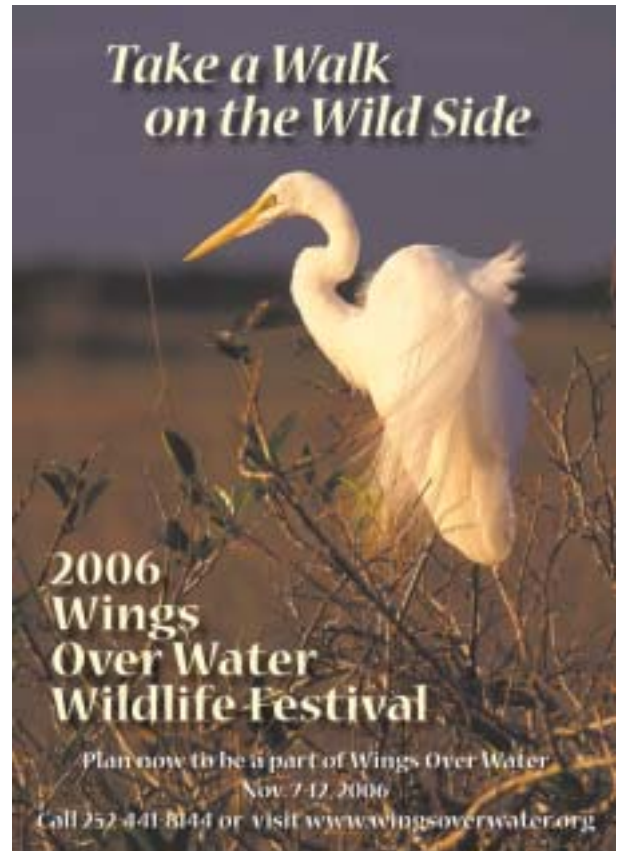
“He does a little bit of everything,” explains refuge staffer Bonnie Strawser about Volunteer of the Year Neal Moore. Sometimes, Moore just shows up in the afternoon, sets up his scope on the refuge visitor center porch and talks to people. “It just makes people feel at home because he’s never in a hurry,” says Strawser.



Neal Moore - dedicated Refuge Volunteer

In 2004, Moore passed the 500-hour milestone in volunteer service. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service honors its volunteers with certificates and pins and in some cases plaques. These awards are presented when volunteers reach established benchmarks in recorded hours. Long-time refuge volunteer Warren Davis received his 6,000-hour pin at this annual dinner held at the Dunes Restaurant. Receiving pins for 2,000 hours of volunteer service with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife were Ruth Polnisch and Stew Whittle. Whittle was also honored with the award for the highest sales day at the Visitor Center Book Store. Bill Ackiss and Guy Newton received pins for 1,000 hours of volunteering.

Three volunteers earned pins for 500 hours of service: Dee Hardham, Ron Marchand and Marie Reed. Jay Ross reached the 250-hour mark this year and received a pin. Receiving certificates for 100 hours of volunteer service were James Fauth, Jane Gilbert, Jim Gilbert, Jeff Lewis, Ron Scovell, Dottie Stumbo, Paul Stumbo, Heather Young and Myia Young.



Outer Banks Sentinel - Wings Over Water's Newest Partner

It was a sunny day in early November when Sandy Seamans accompanied her husband, Jay Ross, to Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge to greet visitors on the final day of the Wings Over Water birding and nature festival. For almost five hours, they chatted with festival participants, handed out cups of coffee, and learned more about the festival from coordinator Ann Marie Salewski. From that simple interaction, a great partnership for Wings Over Water was born.

For Sandy, editor of the Outer Banks Sentinel, it was a real eye-opener. “Until I sat down and talked with Ann Marie, I didn’t realize how large the scope of the festival was,” Sandy explains. “It seems like a great

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Fire Updates

Although the prescribed burning season was relatively short, from late January to early March, fire personnel were able to do prescribed burning on five refuges for a total of over 27,000 acres. This included a mix of farm fields, marshes, pocosin woodlands and pocosin shrub. A great accomplishment was the burning conducted at Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. The organic soils on the refuge dry out very quickly and always pose a challenge for prescribed burning, but this year fire personnel were able to burn over 2,000 acres.

The major highlight for the season was accomplishing four research burns for the Joint Fire Science

Program smoke research that started last fall. The burns occurred in the Long Shoal marsh and North Navy pocosin (along Navy Shell and



Long Curve Roads) at Alligator River NWR, the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, and at the Croatan National Forest. This research involves many different agencies and will help eastern North Carolina refuges improve estimates of pre-burn fuel loadings and post-burn fuel consumption, validate smoke prediction models, and characterize the smoke emissions for chemicals, gases, and particulate emissions.

Is Your Home Firewise?

North Carolina is experiencing an active fire season with 2,275 wildfires as of March 17. Have you prepared your home for the Spring wildfire season? Start now and follow the 3 R's of Firewise landscaping.

- **REMOVE** any build up of plant debris from the lawn, deck, flowerbeds, and especially the roof and gutters. Also remove vegetation encroaching on power lines and hanging within 15 feet of the chimney.
- **REDUCE** the amount of easily ignitable fuels by removing dried foliage from annual and herbaceous plants and pruning twigs and branches on trees to a height of 10 feet above the ground.
- **REPLACE** highly flammable plants with less flammable ones. A plant list is available at www.ncfirewise.org that ranks native plants by flammability as well as providing information on a plant's wildlife value.

There are numerous things homeowners can do around their home to make it more firewise without compromising the look and feel of the home. Contact the Dare County Firewise Council for an individual home assessment and learn what you can do to protect your home. Call 252-473-1131 ext. 235 for more information.

Red Wolf Updates

In 2006, approximately 20 of the 41 pups born in 2005 have been located and outfitted with radio tracking collars. Denning season will take place in April and May, followed by the field biologists searching for dens to formulate a red wolf litter count for the 2006 summer season. Recently the Recovery Implementation Team met with the red wolf staff to discuss their current research on a number of different red wolf issues: genetics, dispersal, morphology, measurement standardization, habitat density, pup survival, threats to the red wolf population, etc. This data, as well as the exchange from the field staff, will help to guide the Red Wolf Recovery Program in the future.

Come out and howl with the wolves for Earth Day!!! A special howling event will be held at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge on April 22nd at 7:30pm. Call 252-796-5600 to register today!!

Howling Safaris begin the weekly schedule on June 14 and will continue through September 6, 2006 on Wednesday evenings. Registration is required by calling 252-796-5600.

The next "Far Traveler" red wolf teacher workshop will be held in this spring. If interested in attending, please contact Diane Hendry at 252-473-1131 ex 246 or check out our website at <http://www.fws.gov/alligatorriver/redwolf.html>.

Thank you to the following who have donated to the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society for 2006 at Wildlife Level or higher.

Wildlife Member

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Donna Parr	Matthew Stull
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Biology Updates

Continued from page 1

Waterfowl survey numbers peaked at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge during December at 15,042 ducks and swans. The most abundant ducks were northern pintail (6,973), green-winged teal (4,266), and the ring-necked duck (890). As determined by aerial survey waterfowl numbers peaked at 10,788 during the month of December. This survey resulted in a count of 1,759 tundra swan and 9,029 ducks. The most common duck species at the time of the survey were green-winged teal (3,700), northern pintail (4,220), and ring-necked duck (678).

Pea Island Refuge numbers peaked at 6,440 during the month of November, 2005. This survey resulted in a count of 110 tundra swan, 740 snow geese, and 5,590 ducks. The most common duck species at the time of the survey were northern pintail (2,302) and American wigeon (1042). As determined by aerial survey waterfowl numbers peaked at 7,257 during the month of February. This survey resulted in a count of 413 tundra swan, 450 snow geese, 579 Canada geese, and 5,815 ducks. The most common duck species at the time of the survey were bufflehead (2,392), black duck (1,409), northern pintail (694), and gadwall (612).

The 2005 Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge turtle nesting season was quite successful. The nesting season ended with 12 nests. Of these nests, 8 exhibited normal hatching, 3 were impacted by prolonged flooding, and one nest was laid very late in the season. Decreased soil temperature is believed to be the cause of the last nest not hatching. Altogether, 773 hatchlings entered the ocean as a result of many hours of effort by volunteers and staff.

A 211-pound loggerhead sea turtle was rescued in Pamlico Sound on December 9 transported to a rehabilitation center. It was released later into the Gulf Stream by a Duke Marine Lab research vessel.

The Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for replacement of the Herbert C. Bonner Bridge was reviewed. Comments were prepared and submitted to the Raleigh Field Office of the USFWS – Division of Ecological Services for incorporation in the Department of Interior response letter to the N. C. Department of Transportation (NCDOT). After reviewing the draft document, a refuge Draft Compatibility Determination was prepared at the request of NCDOT to provide guidance for selection of a preferred alternative.

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opportunity for the Sentinel to help Dare County promote the shoulder season. And what's good for Dare County is good for the Sentinel!" Although her husband is both a birder and a volunteer at Pea Island, Sandy is not, but she saw the potential impact that hundreds of birders could have on local businesses. She offered to contribute all the printing and publishing to the event, as well as donating her time, resources, and expertise to develop other forms of marketing for the six-day birding festival.

The Sentinel will print and distribute a full-color Wings Over Water publication, sponsor Internet and print advertising through American Birding, and sponsor print ads in North Carolina and Virginia newspapers. WOW partners hope that the new effort in advertising will attract even more birders to the growing number of Wings Over Water participants that come out each year.

"We are very excited about the Sentinel's co-sponsorship of the Wings Over Water festival," said Ann Marie Salewski, festival coordinator. "They bring to the table a set of skills that we have sorely missed. The Sentinel's editorial and marketing knowledge combined with the Chamber's expertise in public relations and dealing with the public will make a world of difference in promoting what we know will be our best event ever. The Sentinel and Chamber already have an established working relationship through their cooperative efforts working to promote other shoulder season projects. Those combined strengths and experience added to our knowledge of the resource translates into truly a WOW year!"

This year's Wings Over Water is scheduled for November 7-12, 2006. WOW sponsors are busy planning the events for this year's festival and the schedule should be available by late March at www.wingsoverwater.org. For more information about ways you might contribute to Wings Over Water, contact Ann Marie Salewski at 252-987-1118 or email ann_salewski@fws.gov.



Join Today!

Become a member of the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society.

Regular -	\$10	Donor -	\$200
Wildlife -	\$50	Corporate -	\$500

Please make checks payable to CWRS and mail to:
Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society
PO Box 1808
Manteo, NC 27954

30 Second Interview with W. Frank Simms IV, Refuge Law Enforcement Officer



When did you start with AR and PI and where did you come from?
How long have you been with FWS and on what other refuges have you worked?

I started with Alligator River and Pea Island on November 1st 2005. I came from Kodiak NWR (Alaska) and have been with the Fish and Wildlife Service since 2003.

What made you want to become a refuge LE officer?

I had always had the dream to work as a “game warden” for the Fish and Wildlife Service. While in Kennicott Alaska, I realized I needed to pursue that dream and ultimately ended up beginning my Fish and Wildlife career at Kodiak.

What is a typical work day like for you?

Everyday starts off with deciding what refuge I am going to and then formulating some sort of patrol plan. With so many visitors coming to Alligator River and Pea Island, there never seems to be a dull moment!

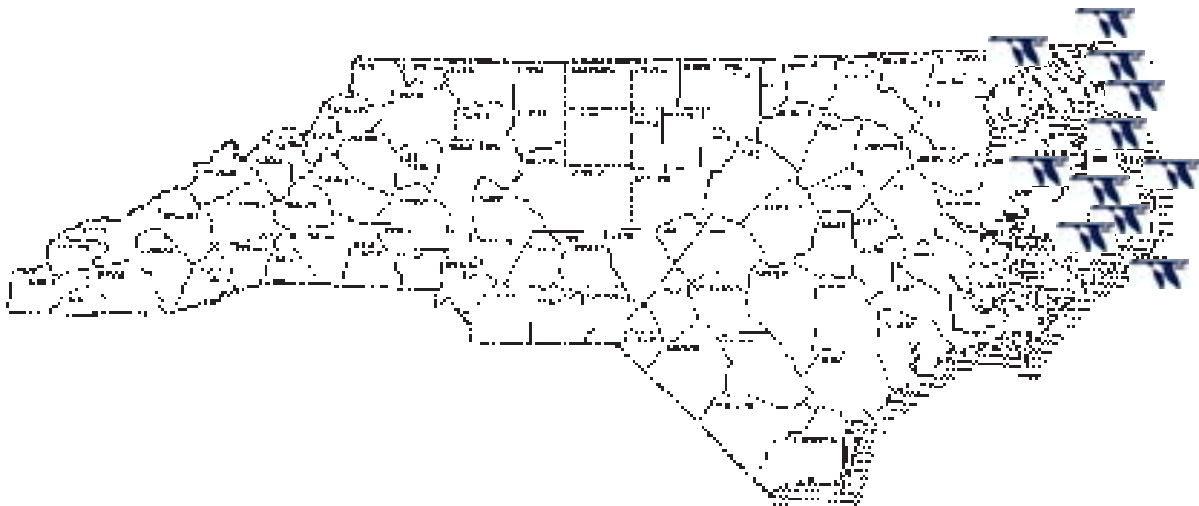
What sort of experience have you had to become a refuge LE officer?

I was fortunate to spend most of my military time stationed at Fort Stewart Ga. While there I had the opportunity to work with the civilian or Department of Defense game warden section. I attended a lot of schools during that time and performed other duties such as 911 and patrol dispatcher. While in Korea I was attached to the 8th Army Confinement Facility. After the military I worked for a local sheriff department as a jailer and for the Army Air Force Exchange as a safety and security detective. The most important experience really comes from spending most of my life in the woods.



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