

# Out & About



## Cooperative Conservation

### Cultivating Conservation with Landowners

*Foundation and Service collaborate on cooperative projects*

BY JOHN BERRY



NFWF



EMMETT O'CONNELL, NW INDIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

#### The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, established by Congress in 1984, and dedicated to the conservation of fish, wildlife and plants, and the habitat on which they depend. The Foundation provides a range of assistance to the Service, including grants for a variety of stewardship projects aimed at landowners. To date, the Foundation has awarded 538 grants to the Service in all 50 states; more than 77 percent of these grants support on-the-ground conservation. To find out more about funding for education and restoration grants, visit [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org) or contact Krystyna Wolniakowski, Director, Northwest Region at [wolniakowski@nfwf.org](mailto:wolniakowski@nfwf.org) in Portland, or Claire Thorp, Director, Southwest Region at [claire.thorp@nfwf.org](mailto:claire.thorp@nfwf.org) in San Francisco.

Did you know that over 70 percent of endangered species are found on privately owned land? Private landowners hold the key to conservation and recovery of many imperiled species across the West. Lands that support families and communities also function as “habitat banks” that support a diversity of fish, wildlife and plants.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Fish and Wildlife Service recognize the importance of private lands in achieving broad conservation goals and species recovery. Today, partnerships make good sense. We are now improving stewardship of these important working landscapes through a number of voluntary programs and cooperative ventures

that fall under the banner of Collaborative Conservation. This approach unites landowners with local, state and federal agencies, non-profit conservation groups, Tribes, and donors to work together on some of our most pressing conservation challenges.

#### Local programs

Working in the Pacific Northwest and the California-Nevada region, the Foundation and the Service jointly partner on numerous conservation education, landowner outreach, stewardship, and incentive programs.

For example, the Foundation launched the *Washington State Community Salmon Fund* program with the Service to provide small grants to communities and landowners. The intent of the

*Top: John Berry, executive director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, provides overview of key foundation programs. Above: The foundation makes presentations regarding its partnership programs to diverse audiences.*

program is to restore salmon habitat on private lands.

To reach a larger audience, a grant for the *Enumclaw Salmon Festival* in Washington supported a “learning fair” showing restoration techniques to landowners and community groups that included visits to sites with successfully completed projects.

A grant for the “*Renewing the Countryside-Washington*” project enabled *Sustainable Northwest* to interview, document, and share personal stories of 43 land and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

#### UPCOMING THEMES

FALL: Volunteers  
WINTER: Tribal Outreach

#### INSIDE

Fish Lock a Big Draw	3
The Winning Combination	5
Growing Seeds, Healing Habitat	6
Field Notable: Hawaii	8
When Kids Lead the Way	10
Singing Our Song	11
Snake Draws Big Media Attention	14

## Out&amp;About

Out & About is published quarterly for Region 1 Fish & Wildlife Service employees.

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We welcome your submissions to *Out & About*. Regular sections in the newsletter are:

Feature Articles  
Case Studies  
Outreach  
Accomplishments  
Trainings & Workshops  
Announcements  
Q & A  
Letters to the Editor  
Outreach Resources

Articles should be submitted by email, disk, or CD and run 150 to 500 words. Gear writing to newsletter style; avoid technical jargon. Photos welcome. Publication is not guaranteed, though every effort will be made to use submissions.

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Fax: 916/645-2839

For unsolicited articles, please contact editor for information about photo submission guidelines.

## Submission Deadlines

Spring February 1  
Summer April 1  
Fall July 1  
Winter October 1

Out & About has received U.S. Department of the Interior and Fish and Wildlife Service DI-550 approval.

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# Engaging Landowners in the Willamette Valley

*Partnerships the key to recovery*

BY JOAN JEWETT

In Oregon's Willamette Valley, a number of rare and listed species are headed toward recovery, thanks to robust conservation partnerships that evolved from public outreach a decade ago.

The mid-1990s outreach investment by staff at the Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex has yielded more than 250 projects with private landowners. These have involved restoring several thousand acres of wetlands and wet and dry prairie and oak savannah habitats at a time when the surrounding area is undergoing tremendous population growth and development.

The result for several imperiled species? Nelson's checkermallow, a threatened plant, could be recovered within five years. The Oregon chub, an endangered endemic minnow, is now found in 33 locations—up from 10 less than a decade ago. And two species of native birds—the western meadowlark and the western bluebird—nested at Baskett Slough National Wildlife Refuge last year for the first time in recent memory.

How did the refuge complex staff do it? “We hit the road, so to speak, and started going to watershed groups, conservation organizations, plant clubs, anybody who would listen to us,” said Jim Houk, deputy project leader at the Willamette Valley refuge complex who started the complex's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. “We realized we weren't going to achieve our conservation goals by just working between the Blue Goose signs.”

Houk and his staff started going to the Oregon State Fair and sportsmen's shows, where they handed out

brochures about the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program and the types of projects the refuge could do with private landowners. They used some materials from the Service's national web site and created others of their own that addressed specific needs in the Willamette Valley. One sportsmen's show in Eugene, Oregon, yielded 10,000 visitors to the refuge's booth.



Nelson's checkermallow is a threatened plant.

As projects got underway, refuge staff worked with local reporters on articles, which generated more interest. Partners, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service and Ducks Unlimited, featured articles in their newsletters. As more landowners were engaged, the word-of-mouth advertising grew.

The investment in time paid off. Landowners have become the complex's best outreach leaders as they show off their restoration projects to neighbors and friends and enlist them in projects of their own. Other agencies and organizations have also signed on: about 50 have been involved in either funding or labor over the past 10 years.

“We've gone from Jim (Houk) working part-time to having two full-time biologists and three other employees in the program,” said Refuge Project Leader Doug Spencer.

A big boost came in January 2002, when Steve Smith joined the refuge complex as the private lands biologist.



JOAN JEWETT/USFWS

Chris Seal, a wildlife biologist at Baskett Slough NWR, explains recovery efforts for the threatened Nelson's checkermallow to Michael Bean of Environmental Defense (in jacket) and visitors from the Service.

He had years of experience working for the state on habitat restoration in the Willamette Valley, which gave him an intimate knowledge of the landscape and a list of landowner contacts. He signed up 28 new landowners for projects in 2005 and expects another 30 to 40 in 2006.

“These partnerships are going to be the key to recovery,” Smith said. “I don't know how else it would be possible.”

In 2004, the refuge complex partnered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to take the program to new heights. The Conservation Service had wetland restoration money through the Farm Bill. The refuge had staff and equipment. Together, they have grown the program into a \$2.5 million effort.

These days, the refuge staff doesn't spend a lot of time on outreach. Their landowner partners do it for them.

“It's an awesome program; I can't say enough good things about it,” said Dale Bergey, who's working on his second restoration of wetlands and wet prairie after hearing about the program from a neighbor. “I've had guys stop by and say they noticed it and wondered how I made it happen. I tell them what we did, who I did it with, and say, ‘here's who you call.’”

“It's just very rewarding,” he added. “You can leave your mark on something.” ●

Joan Jewett is chief of Public Affairs at the Regional Office.

# Fish Lock a Big Draw

*Community takes interest in endangered cui-ui*

BY LISA HEKI



USFWS

This year, the Marble Bluff Fish Passage Facility located at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, was an attraction for media, schools and dignitaries. Visitors watched as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel from the Nevada Fishery Resource Office operated the fish lock facility and moved record numbers of migrating cui-ui above Marble Bluff Dam into the Truckee River. The dam is 40 feet high and spans a distance of 175 feet. The spawning migration began in mid-March and continued through June.

The cui-ui was listed as endangered in 1967 and was on the original Endangered Species list when the act was passed in 1973. Cui ui are only found in Pyramid Lake and use the lower portions of the Truckee River for spawning. They were able to persist through the last century despite significant degradation to their ecosystem in part because they are very long lived and respond well to high water years. Conservation measures, including the construction of Marble Bluff Dam and Fish Passage Facility and the recent modification into a fish lock, have produced the healthy population we witnessed this year.

School children and media alike took great delight in watching the facility and fish lock operate and learning how the Nevada Fishery Resource Office is working with its partners to aid in spawning migrations and restore the endangered cui-ui. From grade school to community colleges, classes make annual field trips to the facility as part of their environmental education program. The Service also scheduled a media

event at the beginning of the spawning season to generate community awareness, in addition to the school tours.

As part of an environmental education program, visitors were able to help Service fishery biologists sample a small portion of the fish as they moved through the fish lock. This sampling helped biologists determine the overall health, size, and sex of the species and

During the peak May migration, the Nevada Fishery Resource Office operated the facility 24 hours per day. At peak operation the fish lock exceeded its design capability, allowing more than 150,000 cui-ui to pass in a 24-hour period. Within seven days, 800,000 cui-ui were assisted upstream to spawn, making a total estimated run size of 1.2 million fish.

Visitors watch as a sample of cui-ui is collected in the exit channel.



USFWS

This record spawning migration would not be possible without the Service's close partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the years of research on cui-ui life history conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Research Division (USBRD).

USFWS



Above and left: Service biologists take samples from cui-ui.

provided an opportunity to explain the biology of cui-ui. Students and the media were given "hands-on" experience as the cui-ui were measured, weighed, sexed, and released back into the river.

By allowing visitation and working with this attentive audience, fishery biologists were able to explain changes to the local environment and lake levels over the last century and highlight the important access the fish lock provides to the cui ui's original spawning habitat. The fish lock is a 40-foot deep concrete chamber that fills with water and allows cui-ui to migrate over the dam without being lifted out of the water.

The Nevada Fishery Resource Office manages the spawning runs, operates the facility, and manages instream flows for the Truckee River. The Bureau of Reclamation is responsible for the maintenance of the fish lock and the dam. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has land management responsibilities for Pyramid Lake and its surrounding area. These partners see the value of their collaboration and are also very committed to this unique fishery management and environmental education program. ●

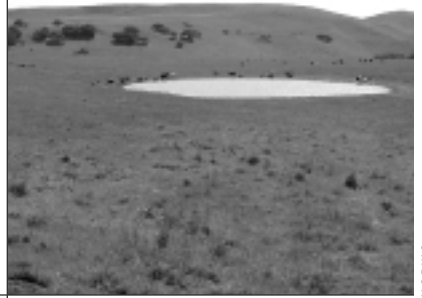
*Lisa Heki is the manager of the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex.*



# Salamander Wins Some Allies

*Winery and ranchers earn exclusions from critical habitat designation*

BY KATIE DREXHAGE



USFWS

The television cameras were rolling and reporters were jotting down notes at the Sainz Ranch in rural Santa Barbara County when Darwin and Jeanette Sainz and their partners, Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates Ltd., announced their role in protecting crucial endangered California tiger salamander breeding habitat on their

Office, “many local farmers, ranchers, and vintners expressed strong concerns that the protections afforded to the salamander by the Endangered Species Act would interfere with their livelihoods.”

In 2004, critical habitat was proposed in the area to further protect the ailing tiger salamander. Service staff remembered the local landowners’ previously expressed concerns and held an informational meeting (in addition to a hearing) to answer questions about the critical habitat designation. They did a special mailing to local landowners to be sure they knew about the meetings. Service biologists then hashed out strategies with those who came to find ways to provide sufficient breeding habitat for the salamanders on their properties in exchange for potential exclusion from the anticipated critical habitat designation.

“As a result of this focused outreach, Kendall-Jackson Wine Estates Ltd. and Darwin and Jeanette Sainz proposed California tiger salamander conservation activities on their properties,” says Henry. “They agreed to protect and enhance suitable aquatic habitats and their surrounding watersheds. Kendall-Jackson even proposed to create additional breeding ponds to promote connectivity between salamander breeding sites.” This collaborative effort will protect seven breeding ponds and create at

Tiger salamander habitat in Santa Barbara County.

least two additional breeding ponds. Kendall-Jackson has agreed to carry out conservation actions that could, by themselves, achieve the preliminary recovery goals for one of six recovery units.

During the media event tour on the ranch, reporters saw salamander breeding habitat firsthand and heard the partners explain how this win-win situation worked. “In exchange for exclusion from the final critical habitat rule published in November 2004,” says Henry, “the media learned that these landowners embraced this partnership opportunity and are helping to control non-native predators, reduce the potential loss of aquatic and upland habitat, and enhance and create aquatic habitat.”

*Katie Drexhage is a biologist at the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office.*



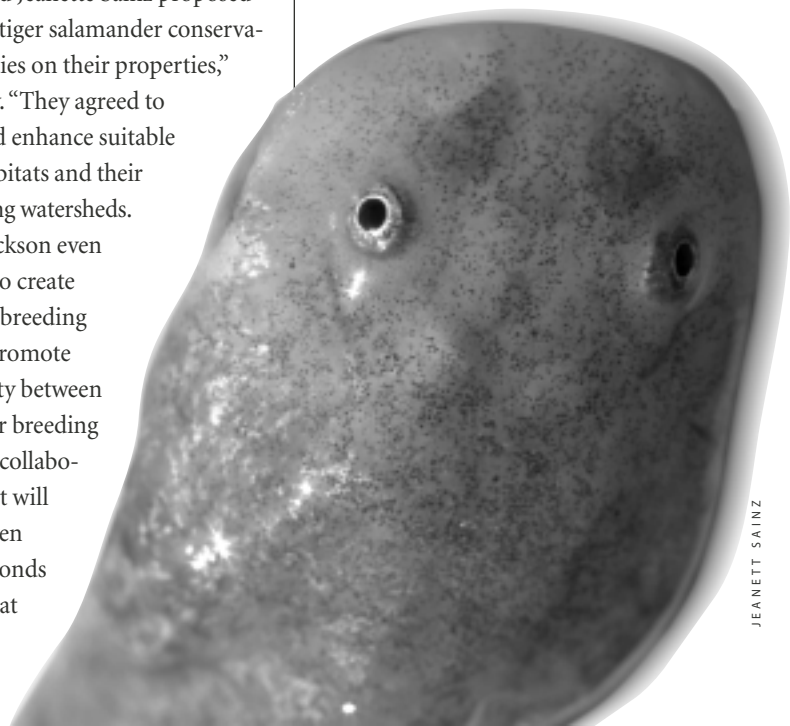
USFWS

*Even the news media got excited about the partners’ efforts to protect habitat for the imperiled tiger salamander.*

properties. The media gathering and tour on the ranch were organized by Kendall-Jackson to showcase an unusual collaborative conservation effort with the Service in a region where concerns about this imperiled species and the Endangered Species Act run high.

“When the California tiger salamander was emergency listed as an endangered species in Santa Barbara County in 2000,” said Steve Henry, assistant field supervisor in the Ventura Fish and Wildlife

Office, “many local farmers, ranchers, and vintners expressed strong concerns that the protections afforded to the salamander by the Endangered Species Act would interfere with their livelihoods.”



JEANETTE SAINZ

# The Winning Combination

*Partners integrate education and restoration in the Willamette Valley*

BY BRAD WITHROW-ROBINSON

In the Willamette Valley of Oregon, there is increasing interest in conserving and restoring native oak woodlands, savannas and prairies. Native Americans originally burned these oak habitats to maintain them. The oaks have all but disappeared in the last 150 years, following changes made by European settlement.

No one has more practical experience in restoring these habitats than the Fish and Wildlife Service.



The refuge complex is a popular destination for school groups which have the chance to experience some practical approaches to educating about restoration.

The Willamette Valley National Wildlife Refuge Complex leads the way in actively managing the upland prairies and savannas on its three refuges in the mid-valley. It seemed fitting and logical for the refuge complex staff to apply their management experience to help meet expanding educational needs.

Recently, the refuge complex joined Oregon State University Forestry Extension (OSU) in a broad new educational project funded by Spirit Mountain Community Fund. The project aims to integrate much-needed demonstration and educational activities with the ongoing restoration activities

already underway at the refuges and other sites around the Willamette Valley. By doing so, we hope to develop a network of demonstration sites to serve an ecoregional approach to oak woodland education. These sites will provide workshops, tours, and other programs for private landowners interested in restoration, as well as activities for youth and the broader community.

The partnership between the refuge complex and OSU Extension provides a unique opportunity to develop and illustrate practical approaches to restoration and education. OSU has vast experience and capabilities in natural resource education. The restoration work at Baskett Slough NWR and the other refuges in the complex provides a means to demonstrate different management practices. Linking education to this process will yield dividends among our diverse audiences for years to come.

The refuge complex staff is seizing many interesting opportunities to become involved with the education process. Jock Beall, complex biologist, has been the driving force in stemming the tide of succession on the complex and improving habitat conditions for the Fender's blue butterfly and its prairie host plant, the Kincaid's lupine. He is helping plan and establish a set of permanent demonstration plots essential to planned educational activities.

Ken Niethammer, refuge manager of Baskett Slough NWR, is not shy about hoping that every child in the region could have a chance to visit the refuge sometime during their five years in elementary school. He is working with



BRAD WITHROW-ROBINSON

OSU Extension to develop educational programs and infrastructure (such as trails, signs and age-appropriate materials) to support local K-12 educators interested in onsite education at Baskett Slough.

Steve Smith, the private lands biologist for the refuge complex, is determined to see more of the practices used on the refuge applied to private lands to restore habitats around the valley. Most of the valley is privately held, so broad conservation goals can only be met through active management of private lands. Smith works with OSU Extension to develop materials and present tours and workshops for private landowners around the Willamette Valley.

It is exciting to find a partner organization so engaged in active land management and ready to help convert its work and experience into practical educational programs to serve a diverse audience. Our challenge is to find continuing funds that will support a regional approach to education. The growing awareness of the importance of these diminished valley habitats and interest in doing work to restore them makes this project timely and relevant, which should lead to future support. Although the project is not yet a year old, we have already made great progress and have reason to believe in its continued growth and success. ●

*Brad Withrow-Robinson is an assistant professor and OSU Extension Forester for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties (north-central Willamette Valley).*

Woodlands, oak savannas, and prairies at Baskett Slough NWR are being restored through partnerships that emphasize education.

# Growing Seeds, Healing Habitat

Local business, community members, and Service restore imperiled habitat

BY LYNDA BOYER



LYNDA BOYER, HERITAGE SEEDLINGS, INC.



With clipboard in hand, Lynda Boyer, restoration coordinator for Heritage Seedlings, Inc., talks with a tour group about brush removal to restore native oak habitat.

A prescribed restoration burn is conducted at a Jefferson farm site. (Photos above and left by Carolyn Doud, Heritage Seedlings, Inc.)

“What is our dream? We want to demonstrate that it’s not difficult to accomplish extraordinary restoration results in comparatively few years, document the steps and timing, and induce other growers to follow our example. Our guiding sense is that most private landowners care deeply for their property in areas of soil conservation, water quality enhancement, wildlife habitat, productive farm capacity, and open space preservation. Government can facilitate this; we can demonstrate effective government/private working relationships. We must learn from each other.”

Mark and Jolly Krautmann, Owners, Heritage Seedlings, Inc.

## Restoration and Seed Production

Willamette Valley oak and prairie habitat is one of the rarest ecosystems in the United States, and is mostly held in



private ownership. Numerous local agencies and non-profits have made the protection and restoration of these habitats a top priority. Fortunately, in Oregon they have been joined by Mark and Jolly Krautmann, owners of Heritage Seedlings, Inc., whose vision for their wholesale nursery embraced these same priorities.

Native seed production in the Willamette Valley is in its infancy and there are few growers of source-identified, native seed. Recognizing this need, we began our native seed production program in 2002. Since then, we have grown over 90 species of native prairie grasses and forbs. The seed is used on our own projects

and surplus is made available to others in the valley that require source-identified native prairie seeds. We also have permits from the Service and Oregon Department of Agriculture to collect and/or propagate five federal/state listed endangered species for reintroduction to protected sites.

Our projects include more than 200 acres of rare Oregon white oak savanna/woodland habitat and upland prairie on two farm properties and 50 acres of bottomland hardwood forest on three farms. The oak and prairie restorations are in cooperation with the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. The program has provided direct funding for the projects, offered important advice, and donated time and specialized equipment. Additional funds have come from a USFWS Private Stewardship Grant and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Landowner Incentive Program (pending). We are cooperating with the Natural Resource Conservation District Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program on our riparian restorations.

Our partnership with the Service has allowed us to try preparation and seeding methods on a variety of prairie sites. They donated the use of a no-till

Volunteers from the Stayton High School Science Club plant native licorice root (an historic medicinal plant used by the Kalapua Tribes) at an oak and prairie habitat restoration project near Salem, Oregon.

drill, hired a skid-steer (rubber tracked) operator to remove invasive brush and young oaks on another project site, and helped facilitate a 50-acre prescribed burn.

## Outreach and Partnerships

These restoration and native plant propagation efforts have been featured in numerous publications. The media has made site visits and published stories in local papers. The Oregon Habitat Joint Venture highlighted our Jefferson, Oregon project in a September 2004 web-article. The Jefferson site was also chosen as one of four “Landowner Stories” for new joint agency/non-profit publication, *A Landowner’s Guide for Restoration and Managing Oregon White Oak Habitats*.

Mark and Jolly Krautmann have also been the recipients of numerous awards, including the 2002 Quality of Life Award “Today’s Choices: Tomorrow’s Community;” 2003 Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Award for Forested Lands (ODF/ODFW); and the 2004 Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society award.

While much of our work has been done mechanically with our own machinery and employees, we have numerous youth groups to help with manual weed control, native plantings, and bird box mounting/monitoring. We reached these groups through our bi-annual tours, newspaper articles, and our local watershed council coordinator.

Our biggest outreach efforts have been our bi-annual tours, which have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



# When Outreach Goes Door-to-Door

*Meeting the partnership challenge in Nevada*

BY LAURIE SADA

It can be challenging to create a successful partnership program, especially in Nevada, where the rural character of a state encompassing over 70 million acres demands some unique outreach approaches.

Add to this some realities of settlement. The driest state in the Union was settled in such a way that the majority of the water resources, and therefore trust resources, are on private lands. By contrast, 87 percent of the land is federally-managed, creating both the potential for enmity and the opportunity for partnerships.

Like other partnership program offices, we draw from a great conventional bag of outreach tools — from hosting public meetings to posting grant opportunities and other resources on our web site. Since the populace we serve includes strong individuals who often live in remote areas with a proud tradition of self-reliance, we must seize all opportunities and look for unusual ways to reach potential partners to showcase our partnership programs. A door-to-door approach is often required, complemented by creative and personal outreach efforts.

Developing a strategy and identifying partners who would be willing to work with the federal government to recover listed and unlisted species has been essential to our successful program. Potential partners rarely seek us out, so we must actively pursue projects by meeting with landowners in their homes or searching them out in their fields in order to meet with them on their own terms and restrictive schedules. At times, we have participated in

multiple day tours of 70,000-acre ranches, where we have listened to the rancher to develop a partnership that will meet the rancher’s needs and those of imperiled species. “We maintain an open mind, are willing to work as long as it takes, and are ready to be flexible in negotiating projects,” said Bridget Nielsen, Conservation Partnerships Program coordinator.

We have looked for innovative ways to foster partnerships. For example, one of our biologists participated in the Service’s Walk a Mile in My Boots Program, where she spent a week working on the ranch of the President of the Nevada Cattleman’s Association. Walk a Mile in My Boots is an exchange program between ranchers and Service employees who “trade places” to learn more about each other’s lifestyles, increase communication, and seek common goals. This led to an invitation to set up a booth and give a presentation about the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program at the Cattleman’s Association’s annual meeting. During the three days we attended the convention, several ranchers requested assistance from the Service to develop a habitat restoration projects on their property.

To succeed in Nevada, sometimes the best outreach tools are personality traits. Our staff members must be patient and persistent. They must be extroverted, able to listen, and possess a can-do attitude. They must absolutely be able to think outside of the box in order to find creative solutions to numerous challenges. And they must be able to accept and persevere in an environment that can be downright

confrontational to government employees trying to do their jobs.

Combining these attitudes with fresh outreach approaches is now yielding some big results. After a 20-year history of strained communications, the Service and Duckwater Shoshone Tribe developed a Memorandum of Understanding to restore habitat for the threatened Railroad Valley springfish using over \$475,000 in multi-agency grants. Following three years of meetings, a federal/state partnership used Service funds to purchase the Locke’s Ranch to protect 460 acres of threatened Railroad Valley springfish habitat. Numerous days of travel, hours of negotiations and a lot of patience led to the first Safe Harbor Agreement in Nevada in 2003 for the endangered White River spinedace. This landowner recently implemented a \$65,000 Partners for Fish and Wildlife restoration project that assisted the landowner with water delivery. This has resulted in a second population of White River spinedace that will serve as refugia should the donor population be faced with extirpation.

Prior to 2001, partnerships with private landowners and tribes were rare in Nevada. This was reflected in the small amount of habitat restoration funding expended — less than \$40,000. Since 2001, we have helped over 40 private landowners and five Tribes secure more than \$3,000,000 through several Service programs — measurable evidence that Nielsen’s tailored outreach efforts are creating many valued and important collaborations. ●

*Laurie Sada is an assistant field supervisor in the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office in Reno.*



BRIDGET NIELSEN, USFWS, NFWO

USFWS partners are diverse, such as members of the Washoe Tribe who partnered with the Service to improve habitat at Clear Creek.

BRIDGET NIELSEN, USFWS, NFWO



Water is scarce in Nevada, so cooperative efforts to protect and restore important water sources, such as Hay Corral Spring, are vital to conservation efforts.



Meet Our Field Notables

# The Hawaii Conservation Partnerships Program Team

*Innovative approaches win national recognition*

BY JEANNE CLARK



**Above:** Local community volunteers help build a fence to protect upland forest resources in Kahikinui, Maui.

**Top right:** USFWS biologist Donna Ball (left) and a cooperater survey a forest restoration area on the island of Hawaii.

It's easy for Fish and Wildlife Service employees to think enviously of their Hawaiian counterparts working in an island paradise. Even though casual clothes are de rigeur for field work and the weather is usually great, the challenge of working on remote islands being assaulted by introduced species provides a different perspective about one of the nation's favorite vacationlands.

"We may have a small land mass to deal with," says Craig Rowland, coordinator for the Pacific Islands Conservation Partnerships Program, "but Hawaii and the other Pacific Islands support the greatest number of at-risk species in the nation: 333 threatened and endangered species; 131 candidate species; and over 1,000 species of concern. Our responsibilities extend up and down the 1,100 mile Hawaiian Island archipelago, as well as to the Territories of Guam and American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republics of Palau and the Marshall Islands, and the

Federated States of Micronesia. Approximately eighty-five percent of the land is in private hands or state ownership, so the only way to achieve conservation is by working with non-federal partners."

With such a huge area of responsibility, and so many agencies and potential partners with whom to collaborate, the Conservation Partnerships Program staff has had to devise ways to create partnerships, boost their efficiency, and expand their customer service. Through countless meetings, creative outreach strategies, and site visits, the staff has distributed over \$13 million to its many partners since 1999, and garnered many millions of dollars in matching funds and in-kind services for conservation projects throughout the islands. This is not an accomplishment that can be attributed to a single person. It has required the talents of an entire team. Our Field Notables are Craig Rowland, Donna Ball, Stephanie Bennett, Naomi



NAOMI BENTIVOGGIO/USFWS

Bentivoglio, Benton Pang, and Chris Swenson. Former members of the program include Bret Harper, David Hopper, Ronald Walker, and David Woodside.

The Pacific Islands Conservation Partnerships Program staff works on three traditional voluntary habitat restoration programs: the Partners for Fish and Wildlife, Coastal Program, and the Private Stewardship Grants Program. Add to this, in recent years, one of the most unique partnership programs in the country, the Hawaii Endangered Species Act Community Conservation Initiative. The staff began this effort on the island of Hawaii in 2002 to reduce longstanding conflicts between endangered species protection and hunting programs involving introduced pigs, goats, deer and other game animals. It has since expanded it to all the main Hawaiian Islands.

Not surprisingly, hunters have strong concerns regarding the listing of more endangered species or designating critical habitat because of the perceived impact to game mammal management. "We had public meetings and listened to both hunters and endangered species advocates," explains Rowland. "We created a working group so these diverse interests could discuss their points of view and recommend projects together. Later, we took the discussion to a broader audience with public meetings."

The Community Conservation Initiative has achieved a degree of success. It has increased the quality

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



# Help for Hawaii's Offshore Islets

*Partners pool resources to eradicate introduced species*

BY KEN FOOTE

Hawaii is known for its spectacular natural beauty, enticing millions of people a year to visit the islands to enjoy clear blue waters, cascading waterfalls, and lush green forests. What many visitors and some residents do not realize is that Hawaii is a fragile image of its former self.

Though plagued with a myriad of environmental threats, non-native invasive species continue to be the greatest single threat to Hawaii's wildlife and their habitats. Hawaii has more than 300 endangered or threatened species, representing almost one quarter of the nation's listed species. Many are imperiled because of competition with or predation by introduced species. How can native species be protected and restored? The answer involves partnership and outreach!

In 2002, a group of natural resource professionals came together to form the Offshore Islet Restoration Committee, or OIRC. The OIRC recognized that Hawaii's offshore islets are the last refuge for many of the state's rare coastal species and can serve as examples to educate people about the Hawaii of old.

The OIRC is comprised of representatives from the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Service, Bishop Museum, The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Pele Polynesia, the National Tropical Botanical Garden, and the University of Hawaii.

Early on, the OIRC recognized the need for and importance of effective

outreach to influence the diverse groups that use Hawaii's offshore islets. Guided by a five-year outreach plan, members and volunteers have produced a variety of helpful materials, from informational fact sheets to a comprehensive web site (currently under revision).

Several educational products target specific user groups. For instance, a poster entitled "Fishing with Friends" reaches out to people who fish, showing the seabirds they may encounter,

STEPHANIE BENNETT/USFWS



OIRC volunteer Naomi Sugimura standing next to one of the Mokulua signs (Mokulua islet). Ms. Sugimura designed graphics for the sign.

how seabirds benefit fishermen, and what they can do to ensure the seabirds' survival. In order to target recreational kayakers, a laminated informational card was designed to attach to rental kayaks. The card describes common native and invasive species they may encounter on the islets, and proper behavior to ensure the protection of native species.

A 2005 Earth Day event held on the island of Oahu was another outreach highpoint. For the past two years, fourth and fifth grade students from Lanikai School heard about scientific research on the Mokulua islets and experienced hands-on activities to learn about native versus introduced species, insect ecology, adaptation,

and Hawaii's coastal ecosystem. The students designed two signs to provide visitors with information about the plant and animal communities on the islets and to show what islet visitors can do to help eliminate or reduce potential negative impacts. On Earth Day, a morning assembly honored the students and unveiled the signs with a traditional Hawaiian blessing. Afterwards, the students took a boat ride to the islets to place the signs and enjoy the fruits of their labor.

What's next for the OIRC? With the Service, they will break new ground on Lehua Island, north of Kauai, with the proposed eradication of small mammals using new techniques that have proven effective in other areas, such as New Zealand. The island supports more than 25,000 pairs of breeding seabirds of at least eight species, as well as the largest colony of brown boobies in Hawaii. Unfortunately, rats, rabbits, and other invasive species have limited the wildlife potential of the island.

As with the other projects, we plan a significant outreach campaign to ensure that area residents understand the eradication effort and to gain support for returning Lehua to a more natural condition. In the years to come, the OIRC hopes to strengthen its outreach efforts with additional funding and eventually, hire a full-time outreach specialist. For more information on the OIRC visit the web site at <http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/gradstud/eijzenga/oirc/>.

Ken Foote is an information and education specialist in the Pacific Islands External Affairs Office.



STEPHANIE BENNETT/USFWS

Teacher Donna Therrien and University of Hawaii grad student Sheldon Plentovich present students with certificates of appreciation at the Earth day assembly held at Lanikai Elementary School.



"Fishing with Friends" poster designed by OIRC volunteer Naomi Sugimura.

CRAIG ROWLAND/USFWS

# When Kids Lead the Way

*Ranchers provide children with hands-on restoration projects*

BY DANIEL STRAIT



THE BAY INSTITUTE

STRAW kids prepare a site for container planting.

**A**cross the nation, the Fish and Wildlife Service’s “Partners for Fish and Wildlife” Program is restoring and enhancing wetlands, riparian, and endangered species habitat on private lands by providing financial and technical assistance to private landowners. The program establishes partnerships between landowners, government agencies, conservation organizations, and others

has fostered a number of innovative efforts, none is more satisfying than a collaboration that has been developed involving students and teachers working in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa Counties in northern California.

At the heart of the partnership is a project called Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW), coordinated through The Bay Institute of Novato. STRAW provides teachers and students with the scientific, educational, and technical resources to prepare them for hands-on, outdoor watershed studies through projects conducted on private farm and ranch lands.

Partners has provided financial assistance for this outstanding public educational and outreach opportunity since 1995, when it provided funding to STRAW’s predecessor, the Shrimp Club of Brookside School. Facilitated by the delightfully disarming and fresh approach of elementary school kids to the local ranchers and farmers, the Fish and Wildlife Service has established relationships with agricultural producers to restore important habitats for fish and wildlife that may not have been possible otherwise.

In 2005, the Partners program will again support STRAW kids as they plant native riparian trees and shrubs, install erosion control structures, and conduct other efforts to restore habitat and improve water quality. With funding from the Partners program and other supporters, this year’s 22 riparian restorations and three plant establishment days reached 1,456 students from 60 classes, who planted 989 native

plants and removed 27 cubic yards of non-native vegetation.

STRAW’s restoration activities are community-based, helping raise awareness about problems facing watersheds and the importance of taking action to improve ecosystem health. The project sustains numerous long-term partnerships with environmental professionals who provide specialized assistance with restoration and scientific studies and educational support.

Partners have included ranchers and other landowners, private sector scientists and restoration experts, public resource agency staff, and community volunteers. The partnerships help enrich the students’ educational experiences by linking schools and their classrooms with larger community concerns and providing examples of environmental careers. Students that participate in the restorations give back to the community by becoming more aware and engaged in solving environmental problems.

The Service sees no better investment of its resources, and no more effective way of reaching out to the agricultural community and the public at large, than by supporting the groundbreaking efforts of STRAW, The Bay Institute, and the dozens of other partners that have helped the program grow and thrive. ●

*Dan Strait is a fish and wildlife biologist with the Conservation Partnerships Program of the California/Nevada Operations Office in Sacramento.*

*STRAW provides teachers and students with scientific, educational, and technical resources*



THE BAY INSTITUTE

The students lend a hand to install a “willow wall” bank stabilization structure.

with an interest in working to conserve our nation’s biological diversity and to ensure that there will be fish and wildlife to enjoy in the future.

Since 1990, the Partners Program in California, part of the Conservation Partnerships Program of the California/Nevada Operations Office located in Sacramento, has provided cost-share assistance to hundreds of private landowners to restore and improve wetlands, riparian areas, and other native habitats benefiting a variety of fish, wildlife, and endangered species. While Partners



# Singing Our Song

*Endangered vireo discovery yields great media opportunity*

BY JIM NICKLES

Contrary to popular perception, reporters love “good” news — if it is newsworthy enough, and if it’s a good story.

A case in point was the surprising discovery of least Bell’s vireos at the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge. The small, nondescript songbirds, an endangered species, hadn’t been seen in California’s Central Valley in 60 years. A news release issued by the refuge, with the assistance of the External Affairs Program at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, garnered widespread media interest not only in the discovery, but on the refuge’s success in recent years at working with partners to restore some of the Valley’s most-imperiled habitats.

Lynette Lina, a bird counter for Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Conservation Science, heard the vireo’s song in early June at the refuge west of Modesto — a sighting that was quickly confirmed by other experts.

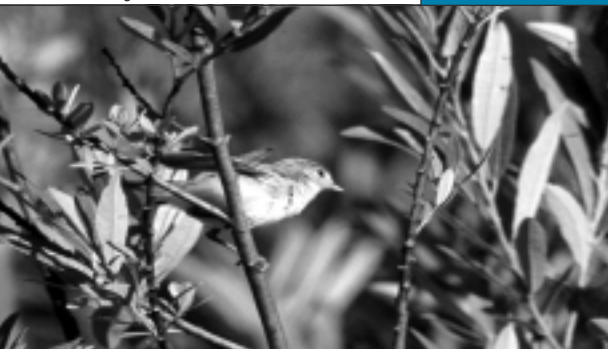
As they discovered, a pair of least Bell’s vireos were nesting along the banks of the San Joaquin River, in a flood-plain forest that wasn’t there three years ago. In a restoration completed only this spring, 800 acres of a former farm field has grown into a tangle of willows, blackberry, wild rose and other native plants, some already 30 feet high. The small forest is reminiscent of the dense riparian growth that once covered millions of acres in the Central Valley. Until this pair arrived, least Bell’s vireos hadn’t nested in the Central Valley in 85 years, having been confined to small streams in Southern California and along the coast.

Thanks to the timely news release, distributed to the news media throughout California and posted on the web, the birds’ arrival made headlines throughout the state and nationally. The story was picked up by the Associated Press; it was prominently posted on the MS-NBC web site, and the Fresno Bee sent a reporter and a photographer to the refuge to do an extensive feature story.

The lesson learned? “When you have a good story to tell, tell it,” said Al Donner, manager of the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office’s External Affairs Program. “If you tell your story in a compelling way, and you work with reporters to make sure they get everything they need, including pictures, you are almost guaranteed positive coverage.”

The refuge’s habitat restoration is the work of a broad partnership of at least nine different organizations. The CALFED Bay-Delta Program, a coalition of federal and state agencies working to improve California’s water supplies and watersheds, launched the effort in 1998 when it provided key funds to purchase an 800-acre farm. Many other agencies also contributed, among them the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Resources Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, and the Audubon Society.

The hands-on restoration work is an adaptive effort by three conservation partners — PRBO Conservation Science, River Partners, and the Endangered Species Restoration Program (ESRP) at California State



PO-HON LIU

University-Stanislaus. Each year they have made refinements to improve the quality of habitat being developed for native bird and animal species. The process is closely monitored by PRBO and ESRP, two wildlife organizations that work closely with state and federal agencies to monitor special species.

“The San Joaquin River NWR is entirely about partnerships,” said refuge manager Kim Forrest. “It would not exist if it were not for our funding partners that helped pay for land acquisition and restoration. It would not be successful if it were not for our management partners. Period.”

*Jim Nickles is deputy chief of External Affairs in the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office.*

## Growing Seeds, Healing Habitat

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6



attracted gardeners, landscapers, nursery owners, researchers, and private landowners, as well as people from agencies and non-profits. The tours allow us to share information about the importance of native plants — not only for restoration, but for gardens and landscapes, as well. We announce the tours and share other information on our web site ([www.heritageseedings.com](http://www.heritageseedings.com)), which showcases some of our restoration work.

*Lynda Boyer is the restoration and native plants manager at Heritage Seedlings, Inc.*

The Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office’s upbeat news release regarding the first appearance of an endangered least Bell’s vireo in 60 years at a Central Valley refuge prompted excellent coverage about the bird and recent restoration efforts.

A tour group learns what it feels like to walk through a native prairie at a restoration site near Salem, Oregon. (Photo by Carolyn Doud, Heritage Seedlings, Inc.)

# Announcements

## Conference on Cooperative Conservation

In August 2004, President George W. Bush signed the Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation Executive Order which directs federal agencies that oversee environmental resources and programs to promote cooperative conservation in full partnership with states, local governments, tribes, and individuals. The order directs the Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to convene a White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. The Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency are co-hosting the event in St. Louis, MO, on August 29–31, 2005. Among the conference's purposes are to broaden and facilitate conservation partnerships, bring together key stakeholders, identify ideas for future policies and initiatives, and exchange ideas. You can learn more about the conference at [www.conservation.ceq.gov](http://www.conservation.ceq.gov). The conference coincides perfectly with the publication of this issue of *Out & About*, which focuses on the same topic.

## Standard Visitor Center Designs Coming

Representatives from several regions and the Washington office will use existing visitor center designs from Regions 3 and 5 as the basis to create a suite of eight to 10 standard designs for visitor centers and administrative office space. For more information, contact Allyson Rowell at 703/358-2391.

## NCTC Grants for Friends

Do you have a great volunteer or member of a friends group that would benefit from taking a course at the National Conservation Training Center? The Friends of the National Conservation Training Center, Inc. announced they

have received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to pay tuition and room and board for refuge friends group members and/or volunteers who wish to attend NCTC training courses. The grant does not cover transportation costs. For more information contact Laura Jones at 304/876-7499.

## FWS Partnership Study Results Available

Results of a recently conducted study of partnerships within the Fish and Wildlife Service are now available from the National Conservation Training Center's Division of Education Outreach. This broad based study, conducted by the University of Florida School of Forest Resources and Conservation, explored Service employee perceptions of partnerships and identified specific skills and factors that contribute to successful partnerships.

Tools and resources were identified that employees can use to develop and implement partnerships and a supplemental study to examine the employee's job history and partnership experience is included. A complete copy of the report "Conservation Partnerships: A Survey of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Employees" can be found on the Service intranet site at <http://sii.fws.gov>; go to "External Affairs," then "Outreach," then "NCTC Division of Education Outreach."

## EE Certification Program Survey

The Center for Science Teaching and Learning at Northern Arizona University has considered offering a certificate program for informal or environmental educators for several years. You can learn more about this partnership effort and take an online survey by going to <http://naaee.org/projects/certification.pdf>.

## RESOURCES

**White House Executive Order regarding Cooperative Conservation** can be viewed at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/08/20040826-11.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/08/20040826-11.html).

**FWS Partnerships Portal** The Service is committed to a collaborative approach to conservation. This web site includes information and tools to build partnerships, funding opportunities, volunteer information and partnership links. See [www.fws.gov/partnerships/](http://www.fws.gov/partnerships/).

**Cooperative Conservation: Success through Partnerships** This Department of the Interior publication is available as a PDF from the FWS web site at [www.fws.gov/partnerships/](http://www.fws.gov/partnerships/) or [www.doi.gov/initiatives/conservation.html](http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/conservation.html).

**Promoting Partnerships for Conservation: The Landowner Incentive Program** is another Department of the Interior publication available as a PDF at [www.doi.gov/news/landincent/pdf](http://www.doi.gov/news/landincent/pdf).

**Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program** portal includes information about the Partners program, state information, links, and more. Go to [www.fws.gov/partners/](http://www.fws.gov/partners/).

**Strengthening Citizen Stewardship and Cooperative Conservation** is explored at this DOI web site at [www.doi.gov/initiatives/conservation.html](http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/conservation.html).

**Partnerships Legal Primer** is a 138-page compendium of information provided by the Department of the Interior about entering into agreements with partners. Find it at [www.doi.gov/partnerships/pdfs/PartnershipLegalPrimer1stEdition.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/partnerships/pdfs/PartnershipLegalPrimer1stEdition.pdf).

**Cooperative Conservation America** is a web site devoted to sharing stories, lessons, knowledge, and tools shared by Americans involved in cooperative conservation. The site includes a variety of projects and cases studies, including 54 for the Fish and Wildlife Service. Go to [www.cooperativeconservationamerica.org/](http://www.cooperativeconservationamerica.org/).

**The Environmental Defense Fund Conservation Newsletter** *Conservation Incentives* is a free newsletter available online. Read the current and back issues and subscribe to the newsletter at [www.environmentaldefense.org/go/conservationincentives](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/go/conservationincentives). The Fund also maintains a Conservation Incentives Library at [www.environmentaldefense.org/go/incentiveslibrary](http://www.environmentaldefense.org/go/incentiveslibrary).



**Cultivating Conservation with Landowners** *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

business owners and their efforts to restore habitat on their lands to benefit fish and wildlife, while trying to achieve sustainability in rural areas of Washington.

Our grants to underwrite the development and implementation of a *simplified permitting program* for farmers grew from an effort to provide responsive customer service. Funded in part by *The Nature Restoration Trust*, a Foundation partnership that leverages Service dollars with funds from PG&E Corporation, this program began in one California county and is now expanding throughout the state.



WASH. STATE DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

**National programs**

The Foundation and the Service also collaborate on numerous national efforts. For example, *The Nature of Learning Program* provides grants to community groups and schools interested in using national wildlife refuges as outdoor classrooms.

The *National Wildlife Refuge Friends Group Grant Program* provides capacity building grants to groups that help the National Wildlife Refuge System

achieve its educational and restoration goals in the local communities.

The *Pulling Together Initiative* provides grants that assist with the control and eradication of invasive species.

The *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program* funds important recovery projects. For example, in California, Foundation grants are helping to develop individual and programmatic Safe Harbor Agreements in Yolo and San Joaquin counties to benefit the California red-legged frog and the valley elderberry longhorn beetle.

These are just a small sampling of our collaborative ventures. When we look at what drives these programs, we know that funding and understanding the science alone is not enough. Connecting programs and landowners requires a solid foundation of outreach. We must devise creative ways to reach landowners. Once we have made contact, we must provide good customer service by listening, building trust, and developing mutually satisfying goals.

In addition to offering numerous partnership programs and funding, the Foundation helps the Service craft outreach programs to reach landowners, extension agencies, opinion leaders, the media and others. These include:

- Facilitating media coverage of grants made possible by Service funding;
- Preparing and circulating written, oral and pictorial stories about landowners who have succeeded with restoration efforts;
- Building a network of articulate speakers (ideally landowners themselves) to develop an effective outreach program;
- Contracting with experienced landowners and non-profits to inspire others with stewardship programs; and
- Improving listening, dialogue and collaboration skills of Service representatives who routinely work with the public.



NARRATIVE LAB

The Foundation has and can continue to help the Service leverage funds and gain access to previously inaccessible funds. We are effective at:

- Working with other agencies to increase collaboration for existing federal and state programs;
- Targeting high priority regions/basins/watersheds and developing long-term planning, implementation and evaluation projects;
- Working more closely with state and local governments and specialized non-profits to leverage each other's funds;
- Identifying potential funding sources, such as settlement and mitigation funds, and developing philanthropic and corporate partnerships; and
- Supporting projects that generate funds that can foster long-term stewardship investment (e.g., land trusts).

Whether it is assistance with outreach or on-the-ground funding, the Foundation is well-positioned to help the Service extend the power and effectiveness of these important collaborative projects. ●

*John Berry, formerly executive director of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is now director of the National Zoo, in Washington D.C.*

*Above: A biologist samples fish on a tributary to the Yakima River in Washington. The effort is part of the Columbia River Basin Water Transaction Program, where NFWF partners with agencies, irrigators, ranchers, Tribes, land trusts, and other voluntary cooperators to enhance stream flows throughout the basin.*

*Left: Students visiting Hylebos Creek learned about the NFWF-funded restoration program and helped release Chinook salmon smolts.*

# Snake Draws Big Media Attention

*San Francisco garter snakes arrive from European zoo*

BY JIM NICKLES

USFWS



The San Francisco garter snake's arrival at San Francisco Zoo attracted a large media gathering.

A special media event in early June at the San Francisco Zoo, marking the return of the endangered San Francisco garter snake to its namesake city, demonstrates the benefits of working with a variety of partners in planning and executing an outreach strategy.

But it helps if you happen to have a very photogenic, charismatic species.

The June 2 event featured U.S. Assistant Secretary of Interior P. Lynn Scarlett; Manuel Mollinedo, director of the zoo; and Steve Thompson, manager of the Fish and Wildlife Service's

USFWS



The Service's media event yielded major newspaper and television network coverage.

California/Nevada Operations Office; and a variety of public and private partners in the first public viewing of juvenile San Francisco

garter snakes that had just been imported to the zoo from Europe.

The San Francisco garter snake was listed as a federally-endangered species in 1967 and as a state-endangered species in May 1971 due to habitat loss from urbanization and agricultural conversion in areas of established garter snake populations. The endangered—but non-venomous—San Francisco garter snake has been absent from North American zoos since 2003 and is the focus of new efforts to increase wild populations along the San Francisco peninsula. It has dramatic red and yellow stripes and has often

been described as one of North America's most beautiful snakes.

In planning and promoting the event, members of the External Affairs Program at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office worked closely with outreach specialists at the zoo and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area—two of our partners in helping recover the snake. Those efforts paid off with a story and photos the day of the event in the San Francisco Chronicle, the Bay Area's largest newspaper. The event was covered by every network television station in San Francisco and several other newspapers.

"Like recovery of the species itself, outreach is a team sport," said Al Donner, chief of the Sacramento office's External Affairs Program. "We can't recover endangered species without the help of landowners and other partners. And our partners, such as the zoo, the National Park Service and the Parks Conservancy, give the Fish and Wildlife Service's outreach efforts added credibility."

To assist with public outreach and education, the Service provided funding to import 10 juvenile San Francisco garter snakes of five mixed gender pairs from the Netherlands to the San Francisco Zoo. The pencil-thin, 18-inch snakes, with turquoise bellies and distinctive red and black striped bodies, will eventually grow to four feet in length. These snakes will be available for the public to see up-close at the Zoo's Koret Animal Resource Center, part of the Children's Zoo. ●

*Jim Nickles is deputy chief of External Affairs in the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office.*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER 23-25

**Dungeness River Festival**  
WHERE: Sequim, WA  
CONTACT: Dungeness NWR  
360/457-8451

### 24

**National Public Lands Day**  
WHERE: Nationwide  
CONTACT: NEETF  
202/833-2933  
www.neetf.org

### 24

**Nisqually Watershed Festival**  
WHERE: Olympia, WA  
CONTACT: Nisqually NWR  
360/753-9467  
nisqually.fws.gov

### 24

**National Hunting and Fishing Day**  
WHERE: National  
CONTACT: National Shooting Sports Foundation  
203/426-1320  
www.nhfd.org

### OCTOBER 9-15

**National Wildlife Refuge Week**  
WHERE: Nationwide  
CONTACT: Susan Saul  
503/872-2728

### 15

**Return of the Salmon Festival**  
WHERE: Anderson, CA  
CONTACT: Coleman NFH  
530/365-8622

### 15

**Ranching Heritage Day**  
WHERE: Princeton, OR  
CONTACT: 541/493-2612  
www.fws.gov/pacific/malheur/

### 15-16

**5th Annual Bird Fest**  
WHERE: Ridgefield, WA  
CONTACT: 360-887-9495  
www.ridgefieldfriends.org

### NOVEMBER 4-6

**Sandhill Crane Festival**  
WHERE: Lodi, CA  
CONTACT: 209/367-7840  
www.lodichamber.com/cranefestival.html

### Lewis & Clark Bicentennial Wildlife Tales Traveling Exhibit will appear at:

- Kamiah, ID: Sept. 17-26
- The Dalles, OR: Oct. 28-31
- Clarkston, WA: Oct. 1-9
- Long Beach, WA: Nov. 7-15
- Kennewick, WA: Oct. 14-17
- Seaside, OR: Nov. 19-22
- Pendleton, OR: Oct. 21-24
- Vancouver, WA: Nov. 28- Dec. 11

## UPCOMING TRAINING

### OCTOBER 12-14

**Watchable Wildlife Conference**  
WHERE: Virginia Beach, VA  
CONTACT: www.watchablewildlife.org/conference/default.htm

### 8-12

**National Interpreters Workshop**  
WHERE: Mobile, AL  
CONTACT: www.interpnet.com/home.htm



**Field Notables: Hawaii Conservation Partnerships** *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8*

of hunting opportunities primarily by opening new areas to hunting through access agreements, easements, or other means, a move that takes pressure off of other areas important to endangered species. At the same time it has protected and restored important endangered species habitats.

“Landowners come in all shapes and sizes, but many of them want to address similar issues like invasive weed species, feral ungulates, water-

on how to write project proposals.

The staff prepares an annual report that helps sell the program, participates in and sponsors events, speaks to landowner groups, issues news releases, and pitches stories to the media. “Our greatest outreach tool though,” says Rowland, “is actively developing a relationship of trust with private landowners.” It’s an effective approach, resulting in more than 200 on-the-



STEPHANIE BENNETT/USFWS

UH grad student/OIRC member Sheldon Plentovich with several Lanikai students (Mokulua islet). This particular outreach project was spearheaded by Ms. Plentovich as part of her graduate studies.

shed quality, and other problems,” says Rowland. “A single agency can’t fund all these projects but by pooling funds, we can often address the greatest concerns.” The program staff works closely with other conservation funding organizations (federal, state, local and private), looking for opportunities to collaborate on projects and ways to further the common cause of habitat restoration. These close working relationships also serve to easily link landowners with an array of funding sources.

This is proactive outreach, an important part of their planned outreach effort. The program web site features fact sheets, restoration resources, planning tools, information about easements, lists of other agencies and funding resources, even tips

**More Sample Partnerships**

**Habitat Restoration on Maui**

Volunteers are helping to plant native species, pull weeds, repair fences and more on the leeward side of Haleakala Mountain. They started restoring a 10-acre parcel using resources the Service provided and have three additional restoration areas. They now have to turn away volunteers!

**Cooperative Outreach on Big Island**

Several state and federal partners pooled funds to hire a teacher to do workshops to teach teachers how to do environmental interpretation. It includes a summer internship program for high school students, a weekly radio show, and a local cable television show. It was developed to increase awareness of native species among hunters and their families.

**Kona Dryland Forest Project**

The dryland forest is one of the most endangered habitat types. Several partners are working together to develop dryland forest restoration techniques. They have developed a brochure and created a few demonstration sites where they are controlling non-native grasses and planting native species. Volunteers assist and school groups often visit the sites.

ground partnership projects.

It should come as no surprise that these creative Service employees have won national recognition for their efforts. On February 2, 2005, the Pacific Islands Conservation Partnerships Program received the Secretary of the Interior’s Four C’s Award for outstanding achievements in conserving our Nation’s resources through cooperation, consultation, and communication. ●

*Jeanne Clark is editor of Out & About.*

**Restoring Elkhorn Slough**

*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16*

meetings to share information about the project and involve them and other stakeholders in the planning process.

Outreach will also help build understanding and support for future implementation activities. Team members are developing an outreach program that will place information in newspapers and newsletters and on list servers, and will enlist help from local interest groups and their supporters to bring the information to the community.

**Grant Funding**

This important effort is a good example of how collaboration can unify the conservation efforts of numerous groups. The two-year planning process, involving structured planning meetings with updated progress available on the web site, is funded through a grant provided to the California Department of Fish and Game from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Coastal Impact Assistance Program. The Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve and California Department of Fish and Game are jointly managing the project, in association with the University of California, Santa Cruz. The Service currently serves on the Strategic Planning Team.

No single agency could tackle these ecosystem-wide problems alone. Elkhorn Slough will see improved hydrologic function only because diverse partners are pooling expertise, sharing funds, and educating the public about this important endeavor in a well-orchestrated joint effort. Learn more about this project at [www.elkhornslough.org/tidalwetlandplan.htm](http://www.elkhornslough.org/tidalwetlandplan.htm) or by contacting the project coordinator, Barb Peichel, at 831/728-2822. ●

*Julie Niceswanger is a fish and wildlife biologist at the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office.*

# Restoring Balance to Elkhorn Slough

*Partners join expertise, funds, and outreach efforts*

BY JULIE NICESWANGER



ELKHORN SLOUGH FOUNDATION

ELKHORN SLOUGH FDN.



*Above and top right: The Service and numerous partners have joined forces in a major effort to restore more natural tidal functions to Elkhorn Slough and its many wildlife inhabitants.*

Imagine a place where braided river channels flowed unimpaired into the sea, where ocean tides rolled easily into a slough, forming wetlands that swelled and waned with the tides. The Elkhorn Slough watershed was once governed by such natural cycles, but over the past 150 years, diking, draining the wetlands, river diversion, and construction of a railroad, boat harbor, roads, dams, and levees have seriously changed the area's natural patterns. These human modifications have eliminated or degraded hundreds of acres of salt marsh, channel, and tidal creek habitats.

One of the most serious threats facing these tidal habitats today is accelerated tidal flows that are severely eroding the

main channel and banks of Elkhorn Slough. At the same time, dikes and levees separate some wetlands from the main channel and reduce tidal flows, therefore reducing habitat function. These local patterns echo the dramatic loss of tidal wetlands regionally and worldwide, underscoring the need for carefully planned management activities and public involvement.

### Solutions through partnerships

The Service is part of a team organized by the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve to bring together a variety of public and private partners to conserve, enhance, and restore tidal habitats in the Elkhorn Slough watershed by developing strategies to

address hydrological management issues. During the course of a two-year strategic planning process, scientific experts, local, state, and federal resource managers, and conservation organizations will build a shared vision of goals and management strategies. Guided by recommendations from a Science Panel, a Strategic Planning Team will develop habitat goals and hydrological strategies. This information will be summarized in a Tidal Wetland Plan used to guide the restoration process.

Outreach has been an important part of this effort. Partners have created informational brochures and a web site. They are doing presentations to special

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 15*

## WHAT'S NEW?

**New Lewis & Clark web site Debuts:** In conjunction with the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, the Pacific Region has developed a new web site to help people understand the wildlife and habitats of the Lower Columbia River both at the time of the Corps of Discovery Expedition and today. Beginning with an overview of the lower Columbia River landscape at the time of the Lewis & Clark's travels here in 1805 and 1806, the web site examines 200 years of change in terms of vegetation, wildlife, population, and historical cartography using the latest technology in web-based interactive mapping. Visitors can explore each of these themes through an easy-to-use application designed to allow comparisons between historical and modern conditions. The web site can be accessed by a link from the Pacific Region home page at [pacific.fws.gov/](http://pacific.fws.gov/).

**Pacific Region Launches Redesigned Home Page:** In mid-June, the Pacific Region's home page went live with some new design and technology. The page has a new focus on the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, putting field stations located on the National Historic Trail front and

center. The new home page also is road-testing the use of textual rollovers instead of buttons and the integration of ColdFusion into the "Most Requested" drop-down, "News Releases," refuge and hatchery searches, and the image change upon refreshing the screen. The Pacific Region home page is at [pacific.fws.gov/](http://pacific.fws.gov/).

**People First Language:** Have you ever struggled over how to describe the accessibility of facilities at your field station? Is it handicapped accessible? wheelchair accessible? accessible for the disabled? The Disability is Natural web site includes a section on People First Language that can help you sort through the multitude of descriptors and use words that are inclusive and respectful of peoples' needs. See this thought-provoking web site at [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com).

**CNO Goes to the Fair:** A voluntary effort with more than 100 Service staff and about 20 FWS refuge volunteers will reach thousands of California State Fair visitors this year with a positive Service message. In its second year of Fair participation, the various California Nevada Office units developed displays and programs, plus activities for young people at the Fair. Humboldt Bay NWR volunteers even built a new "touch table" where kids can try to guess what critter element (bone, wing, etc) is hidden inside the table.