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**LIFETIME DEDICATED TO PUBLIC SERVICE  
DESCRIBES NWRS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR RECIPIENT**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., FEB. 1, 2012** – A lifetime of dedicated public service and volunteerism has earned New Hampshire resident David Govatski the coveted Refuge System Volunteer of the Year Award from the National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

“Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Refuge System,” said Evan Hirsche, NWRA president. “Volunteers like David make the difference in the overall program success and we salute David’s lifelong dedication to public service and conservation.”

Govatski has dedicated over 11,000 volunteer-hours at the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. He is president of the Friends of Pondicherry, a local booster organization for the wildlife refuge. As a certified silviculturist, he is noted for discovering both the largest black spruce and white spruce in New Hampshire, which were found on the wildlife refuge.

Govatski’s public and volunteer service also includes more than 25 years with the United States military where he retired as a master sergeant with the Vermont Army National Guard. He concurrently served for 30 years as a forester and a fire and aviation officer for the U.S. Forest Service.

“David is well known for the energy and enthusiasm he brings to volunteering on the refuge and dedication to promoting conservation.” Hirsche said. “He invented a new technique of trail maintenance for wetland trails that is now used by other trail organizations.”

Govatski serves on statewide boards including the Museum of the White Mountains, White Mountain History, New Hampshire State Parks Advisory Committee, Weeks Act Centennial Committee, Weeks State Park Association, New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and New Hampshire Audubon, and serves on the board of the Friends of Silvio O. Conte NF&WR. He resides in Jefferson, NH with his wife Kathi who also is a volunteer on the refuge.

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to conserve America’s wildlife heritage for future generations through strategic programs that protect, enhance, and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System and the landscapes beyond its boundaries that secure its ecological integrity.

For additional information about this award and the National Wildlife Refuge Association, please visit: <http://refugeassociation.org/people/awards/>

For additional information about the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation visit:  
<http://www.nfwf.org>

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