



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fish & Wildlife News

January/February 2002

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Craig Manson is Assistant Secretary of the Interior

The Senate confirmed Craig Manson, a California judge, to be Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in January. He was sworn in on February 19.

“Judge Manson has a distinguished record of service in both federal and state government and broad experience in wildlife and natural resource management,” said Interior Secretary Gale Norton. “He will be an outstanding Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.”

Manson was appointed to the Sacramento County Municipal Court in January 1998, and elevated to the Superior Court in June 1998. Before that (1993–98) he served as General Counsel for the California Department of Fish and Game, where he was responsible for providing legal and policy advice to the agency Director, the Secretary for Resources, and the Governor, on state and federal Endangered Species acts, wetlands, water law, California Environmental Quality Act and other natural resource issues.

Judge Manson has been also an Adjunct Professor at the McGeorge School of Law. Prior to his appointment to the Sacramento County Municipal Court, Manson worked as an attorney (1989–93) with the law firm of Downey, Brand, Seymour and Rohwer, located in Sacramento, California. He also worked as outside counsel for the California Department of Conservation.

Manson, a colonel in the California Air National Guard, served as Associate



her tour companion, Congressman Clay Shaw of Florida, for his leadership in Congress to commit the federal government to pay half the cost of the Everglades restoration. Congressman Shaw spoke about his hands-on involvement on the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. DOI Photo: Tami Heilemann.

Professor of Law at the U.S. Air Force Academy (1985–89). He is the founding Director of the Academy’s Air and Space Law Program. He served as Area Defense Counsel (1984–85) for the U.S. Air Force Judiciary, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate (1983–84), and as International Law Advisor for the U.S. Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command, United Nations Command in Korea in 1983.

Manson is a native of Missouri and grew up in New Mexico and California. He earned his B.S. degree in 1976, from the U.S. Air Force Academy, and graduated on the Commandant’s List for Military Excellence, and the Dean’s List for Academic Excellence. He earned his J.D. degree in 1981, from McGeorge School of Law, University of the Pacific, with the distinguished Order of the Coif, Outstanding Graduating Senior. He served as Editor-in-Chief of the Pacific Law Journal.

Judge Manson has served on numerous boards and is listed among the Outstanding Young Men of America, and Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities. He is a member of the American Inns of Court and has received numerous military awards and decorations.

Judge Manson is first African-American to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Hugh Vickery, DOI Office of Communications, Washington D.C.

On the cover:

Close encounters of the refuge kind. *A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge’s senior wildlife biologist, Dr. Laura Brandt, hands Interior Secretary Gale Norton a tree frog during the Secretary’s January 16 visit to Florida to discuss the Everglades Restoration Plan. With Refuge Manager Mark Musaus as her guide, Secretary Norton visited pristine refuge habitats and habitats impacted by exotics and water quality problems. The Secretary thanked*

Service Welcomes Director Steven A. Williams



Confirmed. *Steven Williams, the new Service Director. DOI photo: Tami Heilemann.*

Minutes before President George W. Bush’s State of the Union speech, the Senate confirmed Steven A. Williams as Director of the Service. Williams started his capacity as director by going straight to work, attending a meeting of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council Steering Committee.

“With his extensive background in state wildlife agencies, Steve Williams brings with him the kind of experience and knowledge that will allow him to consult and work cooperatively with the states and our other partners to conserve our nation’s fish and wildlife,” said Secretary Norton.

Oops! We’re Late

We strive to deliver every issue of *Fish & Wildlife News* in as timely a manner as possible, but sometimes changing events overtake our best intentions. This is the January/February issue; and, yes, here it is March already. We held this edition as long as possible to be sure our new Director Steve Williams was on board, confirmed and sworn in—and we’re delighted to call your attention to his first “Director’s Corner” column on the back cover. We know many of you were anxiously awaiting our Special Fisheries Edition. Look for it in the March/April issue. Definitely worth the wait!

Executive Editor, FWN

Canada Lynx Survey Controversy Makes News

“Americans care deeply about fish and wildlife,” Williams said, “and I am dedicated to continuing our nation’s long tradition of conservation and to assuring the future of our wildlife heritage for our children.

“I am honored to have been chosen to lead the Service. The Service faces many challenges, but with the great asset of a dedicated and talented staff,” Williams said. “I look forward to strengthening our partnerships and finding common sense approaches to conservation issues.”

Williams has been Secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks since 1995. His former positions include Deputy Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission from 1992–1995; Assistant Director for Wildlife for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife from 1989–1992; and Wildlife Biologist specializing in research and management for white-tailed deer for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife from 1985–89. He served as a graduate teaching assistant at The Pennsylvania State University from 1981–85, working on wildlife habitat analysis, and as a graduate teaching assistant at the University of North Dakota from 1979–81.

Williams earned a doctorate in forest resources at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park; a Master of Science degree from the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks; and a bachelor’s degree in environmental resource management, also from The Pennsylvania State University. He is a member of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Wildlife Society, and other professional and conservation organizations.

Williams, 44, and his wife, Beth, have two children. He was born in Bellows Falls, Vermont, and grew up in the rural Northeast.

Megan Durham, Chief of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.



Lynx. FWS photo: Erwin and Peggy Bauer.

In the wake of revelations that several biologists submitted unauthorized hair samples as part of lynx surveys in the Pacific Northwest, the Service has taken steps to ensure that such violations of scientific protocol do not reoccur.

The incident involved two biologists from the Service, three from the U.S. Forest Service, and two from the State of Washington who collected hair samples from captive lynx and submitted them for DNA analysis along with other samples from the survey. The biologists all said they wanted to test the accuracy of the lab’s test results by making sure it could identify the lynx samples. Submission of control samples was not part of the study protocol. The incident was originally investigated by the Forest Service and has now been the subject of additional investigations by the Inspector General of the Interior Department—at the request of Secretary Norton—and the General Accounting Office (GAO).

The sample collection and lab analysis were part of an interagency lynx coordination effort which included a three year survey initiated in the summer of 1999 by the Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service to assess the lynx’s current distribution across the United States. Surveys have been conducted in the Pacific Northwest, the Rocky Mountains, the Great Lakes states, and Northeastern parts of the country.

On March 1, Inspector General Earl Devaney reported that his investigation found “no evidence of criminal intent” but “did uncover a pattern of bad judgment, an absence of scientific rigor, and several troubling policy issues.” The IG “tended to

believe the assertion that the FWS field biologist was only attempting to test the laboratory’s DNA capacity.” The IG recommended that the Department “convene a work group of internal and external scientists to review and make recommendations on how to restore rigorous science to the Endangered Species Program, and to design and implement a DOI Scientific Code of Ethics.” The IG also promised follow-up action on a scheduled review of the conduct and discipline process and the Service’s monetary award program.

At a House Resources Committee hearing on March 6, Members of Congress raised concerns that the unauthorized submissions were a deliberate attempt to misrepresent the distribution of the lynx and influence ongoing development of forest management plans. Questions were also raised about whether the biologists involved in the incident received appropriate discipline and why some subsequently received awards. Overall, the extensive publicity concerning the incident has damaged the public credibility of the survey and raised questions about the credibility of surveys for other endangered and threatened species.

At the hearing, Director Steve Williams testified about his commitment to ensure scientific integrity in all the Service’s actions.

“I am acutely aware of the critical importance of quality science as a foundation for the Service’s activities and decisions,” Williams said. “As a Ph.D. biologist, I am familiar with what constitutes quality science and proper research procedures. I am also deeply aware of the obligation of a public agency to be trustworthy in carrying out its responsibilities. The submission of an unauthorized “test” sample was not provided for in the survey protocol and, therefore, was inappropriate and unacceptable.”

All future participants in the lynx sampling efforts are required to attend survey protocols. The Service is developing new nationwide training that emphasizes the importance of following approved scientific protocols and the ethical use of scientific data. In February, the agency issued a Director’s order on “Disciplinary Action for Unauthorized Activities in the Course of Scientific Studies or Investigation.”

Chris Tollefson, Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Service Begins Management Reform Studies

In August 2001, the President launched a Management Reform Agenda targeted to “address the most apparent deficiencies where the opportunity to improve performance is the greatest.” Working with the President’s Management Council, the Office of Management and Budget has developed standards for success in each of the five government-wide initiatives: Strategic Management of Human Capital; Expanded Electronic Government; Competitive Sourcing; Improved Financial Performance; and Budget and Performance Integration.

To address the Strategic Management of Human Capital initiative, the Service contracted out two studies—the Workforce Planning Study and Organizational Study, addressing both regional and Washington offices. These studies began last fall.

“Secretary Norton has given us the charge to improve Government performance by implementing the President’s government-wide management reform agenda,” said Deputy Service Director Marshall Jones. “A critical component of this agenda is the assessment of our current and future workforce and our organizational structure. The Service workforce and programs are more vital than ever to our Nation’s ability to sustain economic growth and quality of life. We must remain flexible, agile and creative in our approaches to conservation. We must continue to examine the needs of our customers and how best to deliver our mission. To do this, we have embarked on two key studies—workforce planning and organizational assessment. I see these studies as important opportunities to help us meet the demands of today while ensuring that we are prepared to meet tomorrow’s challenges.”

The Workforce Planning Studies, focuses on the strategic management of its human capital and organization. Basically, effective workforce planning entails having the right number of people with the right competencies in the right jobs at the right time. The purpose of this study is to provide information needed to ensure that our workforce is properly prepared to meet future mission requirements and challenges, and to establish requisite linkages to our strategic and annual performance plans.

This study initially entails collecting and analyzing workforce data and developing a set of workforce characteristics. The information gathered will be used to define core skills and identify anticipated workforce issues five years into the future.

The Organizational Study is designed to analyze various aspects of the organization, including functions, internal work processes, and responsibilities. Initially, this study will focus on issues, problems, and needs rather than on a typical, comprehensive organizational assessment. Relying heavily on a series of interviews with Washington, regional and field staffs, Directorate members and other stakeholders, information and data will be collected that identify and define issues and expectations that warrant full examination. Previously written organizational study reports will be available to the study team.

The second part of the Organizational Study includes a series of focus groups and interviews in each region and the Washington office that address organizational issues and priority topics for full examination. A complete analysis of those issues, options, recommended actions, and risk assessment for each recommendation will be provided.

Both studies are being conducted by Management Systems International, a firm familiar to the Service. The firm assisted in developing our first strategic plan in 1997, supported the 1998 Refuge System Keystone Conference, and currently is working with the Fisheries strategic planning effort. Recently, Mr. Lawrence Cooley, President of Management Systems International, commented about the end results of the studies by saying, “Central to both of these studies is maximizing the effectiveness of the Service of tomorrow - what Wayne Gretsky referred to as ‘skating to where the puck is going.’ Having the right people is half the battle; having an organization that is more, not less that the sum of its parts is the other half. Linking these two studies helps to ensure that each half reinforces the other.”

Updated information about the two studies will be communicated throughout the Service as progress toward completion is made.

Dana Perez, Chief, Division of Diversity and Civil Rights, Portland, Oregon

Susan Redman, Chief, Branch of Workforce Management, Arlington, Virginia

Guadagno dedication. *Saturday, November 17, the Service dedicated a wildlife observation platform at the Baskett Slough NWR in Oregon in Rich Guadagno’s memory. Guadagno was the manager of the refuge for over 8 years. In addition, the Service plans to dedicate the new office site at the Humboldt Bay NWR in northern California where Guadagno was the manager at the time of his death on September 11. Carol Schuler, project leader for Willamette Valley refuges, places dirt on the Oregon white oak planted in honor of Guadagno. FWS photo.*



The Promise is Sure



Follow the leader. Operation Migration pilot leads the young whooping cranes on their south-bound flight path. Photo: Operation Migration, Inc.

Two hours left to prepare and it was going to be tight. Our staff and volunteer numbers had diminished as weather had delayed plans day after day. We were expecting over 400 at the public and press sites, some having driven 100 miles that morning to get here. We were also expecting some whooping cranes, who'd traveled 1,220 miles for the occasion. We were in northern Florida at the Chasshowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex where six young birds were about to make history.

Whooping crane recovery depends on establishing a third flock to help safeguard the only wild migrating flock out west and an introduced non-migratory flock managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The International Whooping Crane Recovery Team approved Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership's proposal in 1999 to use ultralights on the longest human-led migration study in history to establish a migrating flock between Wisconsin and northern Florida.

The project's complexity called for an array of expertise. The U.S. Geological Survey's Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Madison Wildlife Health Center propagate and raise the chicks from captive pairs, and monitor potential disease issues. The International Crane Foundation brings 25 years of expertise in crane restoration and key fund raising ability. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources manage nesting and

wintering habitat and have responsibilities under federal and state endangered species laws. The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and refuge "Friends" groups help raise funds. And Canada's Operation Migration Inc. handle the ultralight training and lead the actual migration study. Dozens of private landowners, twenty States, two Provinces and hundreds of private citizens have volunteered resources, personnel and financial support.

Bay Mills Indian Community Pipe Carrier Blesses Cranes. *In a historic and quiet ceremony Dwight "Bucko" Teeple, Pipe Carrier from the Bay Mills Indian Community in Michigan, stood on the shores of the wetland harboring the experimental flock of eight endangered whooping cranes at the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin. Using the traditional ceremonial pipe, he blessed the cranes for their migration flight. The private ceremony was uninterrupted except for the crane calls from across the lake and occasional waterfowl flying overhead. "The Anishinabek people are linked to crane as the crane represents an important clan symbolizing leadership. Prayers were for the crane, the Anishinabek and all the people," said Bucko. FWS photo: John Leonard.*

*John Leonard, Native American Liaison
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

When the sun finally rose that early December morning, it was to a baby blue sky and unmoving flags—a perfect flying day. The small flock had lost one of their number in southern Wisconsin and another would later be killed by a bobcat, but these 'solid six' whooping cranes had flown together over the last 48 days. They'd left Necedah NWR in mid-October accompanied by three ultralights, four RVs, two equipment trailers, one combination veterinary clinic/crane mobile, a Cessna 180 single-engine plane and a baker's dozen of biologists, pilots, technicians and communications specialists. Costumes worn by the pilots and biologists ensure wild behavior in the cranes and prevent accidental bonding to humans, an essential ingredient to the reintroduction's success. Flying from 20–100 miles a day, the migration team and cranes had overnighted on 24 private and public properties. After wintering at Chassahowitzka NWR, the young whoopers are expected to migrate back to Wisconsin in the spring of 2002. At maturity, these cranes should teach their young the same migration route. If successful, they could spread to other inviting habitats and the twenty States in the project will welcome them. WCEP made sure to include them from the start.

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The Promise is Sure (continued)

A radio call gives us a five-minute warning and soon necks are craning the banks of the sparkling Crystal River. Television cameras line the south dock for the best long shot, and suddenly we see them to the north coming right at us—three ultralights skimming the tops of tall palms and cypress trees followed by six very long-legged white birds. The crowd got very quiet as cameras pivoted, shutters clicked and pencil stubs scribbled. Tears shone in many eyes that morning and hugs were freely given. The first whooping cranes to migrate onto this Gulf coast in 75 years had made it.

We heard later that the 2,000 people at the mall fly-by had gone dead silent as the birds glided over their heads. And then the buying frenzy started...souvenir tee-shirts, posters, pins and crane dolls went like the proverbial hotcakes. But the true gift of that morning will be when real whooping cranes routinely cut the skies with their flight silhouettes, joining that of the wood stork and osprey in the beauty of nature's diversity. Though the migration study has its risks, the best scientific knowledge and technical skills have been brought together in the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. The immediate outcome is uncertain, but the promise sure and process solid. This is the way to take care of precious natural resources—with others who care.

Joan Guilfoyle, former Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership Outreach Team Leader, Minneapolis, Minnesota

She is currently with the National Park Service, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.

Free Weekend Draws Thousands to Refuges for Peace, Solace



Proud. *An American flag adorned Kilauea Point Lighthouse over Veteran's Day. FWS photo.*

A nation looking for comfort and peace—and a little fresh air and some wildlife—took advantage of a fee-free Veteran's Day weekend declared by Interior Secretary Gale Norton and headed for national wildlife refuges, parks and monuments in droves.

Norton urged Americans to “join together with family and friends to honor the victims of our recent tragedies along with the veterans who protect our nation's freedom and democracy,” inviting the public to enjoy “peace from splendors of nature” on federal lands across the nation, including national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries.

The “Weekend of Unity, Hope and Healing,” November 11–13, drew tens of thousands of visitors to the thirty refuges and one hatchery that normally charge entry fees. Refuges reported that many visitors that weekend had never been to a national wildlife refuge but decided to visit after hearing about the free weekend.

With their wildlife conservation mission and natural beauty, refuges are perfect places to seek out a quiet yet truly wild experience. Refuges that participated in the free weekend found that visitors appreciated the opportunity to explore nature.

At Dungeness NWR in Washington State, a 5-mile long sand spit in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, some 500 people took advantage of the free weekend and expressed their thanks for the opportunity to visit.

“We put up a sign explaining the Veteran's Day free entry to Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge for a weekend of ‘hope, unity, and healing’,” said ranger Kolleen Irvine. “We received several heartfelt thank you's from our visitors in reference to our recognition of the need for Americans to come together in these troubled times. Many of our visitors had never been to Dungeness National Wildlife Refuge and saw the news releases in the local papers.”

Visitors to Dungeness that weekend got a special treat when a bald eagle pair chose to perch in a tree across the water from the refuge's scenic overlook on Sunday—an educational opportunity that truly enhances what refuges are all about.

Veteran's Day at Hawaii's Kilauea Point NWR was “grand,” said refuge ranger Kathy Batha. The refuge celebrated America's veterans as well as America's wildlife heritage with a patriotic display.

“Flags were flying from the administrative office, the visitor center, and all along the path out to Kilauea Lighthouse,” Batha said.

From the lighthouse itself, a special flag was hung honoring Lt. Commander John Barry Schmidt, a World War II pilot who received the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Navy & Marine Medal for Heroism, and three Purple Hearts. Schmidt died in 1990, but his son lives on Kauai and made the flag available to the refuge.

Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico added special bonuses to the “fee-free” weekend, welcoming the first 20 visitors each day over the three-day period with prizes such as New Mexico wildlife guides and U.S. flag pens.

Rachel F. Levin, Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.

Service Presents National Award to Okefenokee NWR Partners

In October, the Service recognized three partners of Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge for their significant contributions to the mission and goals of the Service. The Georgia Forestry Commission, Florida Division of Forestry, and the Greater Okefenokee Association of Landowners received the national Service Citizens Award for their supporting role in innovative fire management strategies on the refuge.

The Okefenokee ecosystem thrives on fire. Without it, swamp vegetation would change from a mosaic of wetland types to a forested bog. Prescribed burns are a primary management tool to maintain healthy habitats on uplands. However, wild fires can be destructive if they leave refuge land and affect neighboring landowners. Partnerships with other local, state, federal, and private organizations and individuals provide much needed support during times of increased fire activity. The association was formed in 1995 for the purpose of managing, protecting, and promoting forest resources in the Okefenokee ecosystem. Its members include industrial and private forest landowners, federal and the two honored state agencies, and other private landowners with a stake in the natural resources around the refuge. The cooperative agreement between the partners and Okefenokee

National Wildlife Refuge is a model for how state agencies, federal government, and private organizations can work together for the continued benefit of ecosystem conservation.

These partnerships proved invaluable in June when a lightning-ignited fire threatened private lands surrounding the refuge. Based on fire behavior predictions from innovative computer programs now in use on the refuge, there was little time to prepare before the fire would leave the refuge. The partners helped identify and ready fire suppression equipment and personnel for deployment on very short notice. Assistance from the partners included fire suppression activities, improvements to and maintenance of Swamp Edge Break, constructing, improving, and maintaining helicopter dip sites, and other support. The arrival of a tropical storm to the area eliminated the need for actual use of these resources. Acting Director Marshall Jones said the outstanding support provided by the partners is a credit to the Service, the organizations, and the citizens of the states of Georgia and Florida.

*Sallie Gentry, Ranger
Folkston, Georgia*

Hand over the loot! *Service Law Enforcement, Virginia, transferred a 1998 Chevrolet Suburban to the National Park Service's Philadelphia Law Enforcement Group in December. The two agencies worked together on an investigation that resulted in the successful prosecution of two individuals and a Virginia corporation for illegally trafficking in Native American human remains and protected wildlife. The sentences included prison time, fines and forfeiture of items including two vehicles, one of which was the Suburban. The Service will keep the other vehicle. Service Special Agent Mary Holt, Richmond; and Park Service Special Agent Clark Guy, Philadelphia.*



Contaminants Training Readies Northeast for Spills



Concentration. *Stan Skutek of Petit Manan NWR, Maine, tends an eider. FWS photo.*

When will an oil spill again threaten rafts of sea ducks in Long Island Sound, or puffins and razorbills in Downeast Maine? We don't know, but Service staff in the Northeast have designed a training program to prepare themselves for handling such a calamity. With more than 6,000 recorded oil and hazardous material spills, large and small, every year, fish, wildlife and habitat in the Northeast Region daily face the threat of harm.

Following the 800,000-gallon Scandia and North Cape spill in 1995 near Trustom Pond National Wildlife Refuge in Rhode Island, Contaminants Coordinator Tim Fannin and 21 field response coordinators organized a five-year rotation of training to increase their ability to respond to the inevitable spills. The training includes annual two- to three-day training sessions, participation in industry, state, federal and international spill drills, and on-the-job learning during actual spills.

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Contaminants Training (continued)

“We fervently hope we don’t see each other until next year’s training,” Fannin said, “but the sessions provide us with tools, support and knowledge to help us handle the next spill.”

Spill responders learn about legal issues; how to operate within the incident command system, which places the U.S. Coast Guard in charge of maritime oil spills; and how to protect the Service’s fish and wildlife trust resources. The Coast Guard and NOAA make presentations; Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research of Newark, Delaware, provides information on wildlife rehabilitation; and spill response contractors demonstrate booming and oil encapsulating products.

The first five-year training rotation was completed this spring, according to Fannin, and the cycle begins again next spring to maintain a high level of response readiness for the next spills.

Where to find more information: The National Conservation Training Center offers a five-day spill training course; NOAA offers SOS—Science of Oils Spills; and information is available on the Service’s Division of Environmental Quality website, <<http://contaminants.fws.gov>>.

*Diana Weaver, External Affairs
Hadley, Massachusetts*

*Tim Fannin, Ecological Services
Hadley, Massachusetts*

Hautman Family Continues Legacy



Joseph Hautman’s painting of a male black scoter flanked by three other ducks was selected as the design for the 2002-2003 Federal Duck Stamp. Hautman’s painting was selected over 11 other finalists after a tense last round of judging that required an unprecedented series of four tie-breaking votes to choose the winner.

“I’m speechless. I was thinking I didn’t win because it was taking so long,” Hautman, a resident of Plymouth, Minnesota, told Interior Secretary Gale Norton when she telephoned to give him the good news.

Joseph won the contest once before in 1992 with his portrayal of spectacled eiders. His brother Bob Hautman won last year’s contest, as well as once previously. A third brother, Jim, has won three times. “It feels like I have to win twice to get any respect in this family,” Joseph Hautman joked.

Since black scoters do not frequent Minnesota, Joseph first saw them on a hunting trip to Alaska in 1990. He kept one to use as a mount to draw the stamp.



Win, place, show. *Joseph Hautman’s winning entry (above left). Second place went to Richard Clifton of Milford, Delaware (above). Daniel Smith of Bozeman, Montana, took third (left). Smith won the Duck Stamp contest in 1987 with his painting of a snow goose. It appeared on the 1988–89 Federal Duck Stamp.*

“We have a great tradition in this country—a rich outdoor heritage,” said Secretary Norton. “Americans have always enjoyed our beautiful natural resources. As we look for ways to serve conservation, there is no better example than our own Federal Duck Stamp.”

“I’m proud that the Service continues the Duck Stamp tradition,” said acting Service Director Marshall Jones. “And as we celebrate Joseph Hautman’s rendition of a black scoter that will appear on the 2002 Duck Stamp, we can also celebrate those places where ducks and geese live, breed, feed and thrive: America’s National Wildlife Refuges.”

The five judges for this year’s contest were; Rita Dumaine, editor of *The Duck Report*; Eric Hansen, an award winning outdoor photographer who specializes in waterfowl; Cindy O’Connor, the Executive Director of The Wetlands Institute of Stone Harbor, NJ; John Rogers, former Deputy Director of the Service; and Wayne Youngblood, publisher of the stamp division of Krause Publications.

*Nicholas Throckmorton, Public Affairs,
Washington D.C.*

Renowned Panel Presents Environmental Ethics Broadcast

Seven eminent environmental practitioners, academics, historians, and philosophers recently discussed environmental ethics at the Service's National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The discussion was nationally broadcast to 21 sites for audiences including personnel of federal, state, and local governments and private conservation organizations.

Phil Pister, executive secretary of the Desert Fishes Council and retired fishery biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game, presented an overview of the literature and the field on the first day of the course and moderated the second day's panel discussion.

Pister said that throughout his four decades in conservation, his guiding principle has been a quote by Aldo Leopold: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Pister recommends this quote as a litmus test for all conservation-related undertakings.

Pister feels that the class was important for Service employees in opening "windows in their minds to how environmental ethics relates to their jobs." He likens learning about ethics to installing a new software program on a computer. It allows people to do a better job than they did before. Pister says that environmental ethics provide a compass for conservation professionals in their daily work.

Panel member Chris Horsch, chief of aquatic resources training at NCTC, feels that the course helped participants, including administrative support staff, to refocus on the land resources. He says that for many Service employees on the front lines and in the field, their work is not just a job, it's part of who they are. They have their jobs because they love the land and the creatures. So he feels that it's important to keep the best interests of the resources in mind when making all decisions, both personal and work-related.



Professional panel. Chris Horsch with NCTC, Curt Meine with the International Crane Foundation, Phil Pister with the Desert Fishes Council, and Michael Nelson, with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The other panel participants were on the phone. FWS photo: Clayton McBride.

An audience member asked about the greatest ethical obligation of environmental biologists today. Several of the panelists agreed that this was to disseminate their knowledge about the wonders of nature so as to inspire love for nature in others. It was pointed out that there is a difference between evoking an ethic and instilling an ethic. The panelists agreed that we should not try to instill our own ethics in other people, who may have different cultural backgrounds that might influence their points of view. We should instead try to help them appreciate the beauty of nature so that they can evoke their own culturally appropriate environmental ethic.

Lisa Deener, distance learning coordinator at NCTC, says that this broadcast represented an important opportunity to bring the most recognized names in the discipline of environmental ethics all together for a conversation.

"Mr. Pister... not only brought exceptional credibility (based on his nearly 50-year career), he also provided the requisite wisdom and humanity, any course with '...ethics' in its name must have to avoid potential arrogance or 'preachy-ness,'" says Mike Smith, deputy assistant director for external affairs for the Service. "When it was over, I felt that indeed I had participated in something of significant and lasting worth."

For more information on the broadcast, contact Lisa Deener at NCTC at <Lisa_Deener@fws.gov> or 304/876 7480.

*Special to FWN by
Joy Drohan, Shepherdstown, West Virginia*

Newly Opened Nature Center Lets Visitors Experience Great Plains Ecosystem

The Great Plains Nature Center in Wichita, Kansas, is a unique cooperative project among the Service and federal, state, and local government partners. The center provides an interactive, hands-on opportunity to learn about the Great Plains and its wildlife for what planners hope will be 150,000 visitors a year

“On this parcel of Service land, we’ve joined forces with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and the City of Wichita to provide a public resource to promote prairie conservation,” said Ralph Morgenweck, regional director of the Service’s Mountain-Prairie Region at the opening. “Without the support of the people who live and work in this ecosystem, it is impossible to do anything about the health of prairie species, which are experiencing faster populations declines than the species of any of other ecosystem.”

The Great Plains Nature Center will serve as a resource for environmental education with school districts, youth organizations, tourists, and other groups and individuals interested in wildlife and the environment. On-site staff from the three sponsoring agencies will provide guided tours, field trips and learning seminars. Two teachers on staff will coordinate curriculum for 2, 5 and 8 grade students.

The 22,000 square-foot facility, located on 7 acres of federal land surrounded by 240 acres of city-owned habitat, features state-of-the art interpretive exhibits where, for example, visitors can test their hearing against a bobcat’s, or learn the sight and song of birds frequently found in the Great Plains. A 2,400-gallon aquarium is stocked with fish native to the area.

A unique, glass-enclosed wildlife observatory provides a year-round view of the adjacent city-owned lands containing wetlands, prairies and riparian woodlands. This 240-acre prairie ecosystem is filled with native wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, raccoons, bobcats, painted turtles and water snakes. It features more than 2 miles of disabled-accessible nature trails.



Opening point. Bob Gress, Director of the Great Plains Nature Center and City of Wichita employee, used Aquila, a captive golden eagle, for part of the grand opening ceremony. FWS photo: Sheri Fetherman.

Conceived in 1988 by city and state officials who later entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Service in 1991, the \$6.7 million center was built largely with Service funds, in addition to significant contributions by the state and city, and generous donations of private funds. Although groundbreaking occurred in 1994, the center’s opening was delayed in early 1997 by a building collapse in Seattle, which destroyed exhibits being built there.

The Great Plains Nature Center, which is also home to the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks regional office, includes a 188-seat auditorium, a classroom, gift shop and offices

Karen Miranda-Gleason, External Affairs, Denver, Colorado

Service funds salt marsh restoration.

Mike Bartlett of the New England Field Office shared a podium with New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg to celebrate the restoration of the Little River salt marsh in North Hampton. The \$1.3 million dollar project called for replacing a 48-inch culvert that was seriously restricting tidal flow to the marsh with twin 6-foot x12-foot box culverts. It was funded in part by the Service through a \$300,000 National Coastal Wetlands grant. The Service was also instrumental in directing more than \$200,000 from the Coakley Landfill Natural Resource Damage Assessment to the 160 acre project, the largest coastal restoration that has ever been undertaken in New England. FWS photo: Bob Scheirer.

Linda Morse, Ecological Services, Concord, New Hampshire



New England Field Office Spearheads Partnership to Remove Dams in New Hampshire

The afternoon of July 24 was steamy, but the heat and humidity failed to curb the anticipation of the many elected officials, biologists, reporters and individuals who gathered in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, to witness the breaching of the McGoldrick Dam on the Ashuelot River. The McGoldrick Dam, built in 1828, would be the first obsolete dam to be removed from a New Hampshire river, a success story that began with a meeting organized by the Service's New England Field Office.

Removing outdated and unproductive dams has become a focus in New England since 1999 when the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River in Maine was breached. The Service-organized meeting spawned the New Hampshire River Restoration Task Force, a group that seeks to restore river flows and water quality by evaluating and removing as many dams as possible.

Comprised of an array of federal, state and non-government agencies and organizations, the Task Force identified the McGoldrick Dam as a candidate for removal early on in the process of inventorying dams in the state. But the group struggled for more than a year acquiring the necessary funds, permits and finalizing the details regarding removal of the 6-foot-high, 150-foot-long concrete structure.



Before. *The Service helped in breaching the McGoldrick Dam on the Ashuelot River. New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services photo. FWS photo: Dan Burke.*

Finally, this past spring, the last hurdle was cleared, and the stage was set to begin removal of the dam. At the celebration on July 24, New England Field Office Supervisor Mike Bartlett joined other members of the River Restoration Task Force, including representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Hampshire's Fish and Game Department

and Department of Environmental Services, Conservation Law Foundation, Connecticut River Watershed Council and Trout Unlimited.

Bartlett presented a certificate of appreciation to Grace Levergood of the state's Department of Environmental Science for her outstanding support of the Task Force during the dam removal negotiations. Other speakers at the event included New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen and representatives from the federal legislative delegation and many of the involved state agencies.

Linda Morse, Outreach Specialist, Concord, New Hampshire



Presidential Visit. *Kodiak NWR concluded last year with a visit from some special refuge volunteers. Former President and First Lady, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, stopped by in September to personally deliver some steelhead genetic samples they had collected for the refuge on Little River. After delivering the samples and greeting staff members, they toured the refuge visitor center and gave refuge staff the opportunity to give them an overview of refuge management and biological programs. FWS photo.*

Exploring Our Past



Contemporary Home for Conservation Remembers Its Pioneers

Construction has begun on the fourth lodge at the National Conservation Training Center, with completion slated for the summer of 2003. The Murie Lodge will recognize three conservationists, each of whom contributed in a unique way to American wildlife conservation. Olaus, Adolph, and Margaret Murie were part of an extraordinary family that made important contributions to wildlife biology and conservation in the last century.

Olaus Murie joined one of our predecessor agencies, the Bureau of Biological Survey, in 1919 as a field biologist. Olaus was an expert on the mammals of the Alaskan wild and Wyoming mountains. He carried out important studies of North American caribou, elk, and coyotes and he is the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks. An accomplished naturalist, artist, and writer he left the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1945 to work with The Wilderness Society and other conservation organizations.

Olaus found a life-long love and soul-mate in Margaret "Mardy" Murie whom he married in 1924. Mardy spent her honeymoon dog sledding across the Alaskan tundra and cataloging Alaskan rodents for a Biological Survey field expedition. She became Olaus's scientific partner as an unpaid assistant for many of his journeys. After his death in 1963 she established her own voice as a passionate writer and wild lands advocate receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998. Mardy shared her husband's insatiable curiosity about wilderness and wildlife sagely noting, "there are all kinds of things to be discovered in the natural world which cannot be discovered anywhere else."

Olaus's younger brother, Adolph Murie, also became an important naturalist with the National Park Service, where he worked for 32 years. Adolph wrote pioneering studies on wolves and grizzly bears placing them in the context of entire ecosystems. Both Olaus and Adolph excelled as field biologists, developing a genuine feeling for their subjects of study. Olaus described both men's work as field biologists: "It is true basic research. It means living with the animals, trying to think as they do, establishing an intimate relationship with the creatures that reveals their motivations in all they do."



Curious. Olaus Murie photographing a fox. FWS photo: Murie Archives.

Site clearing and construction on the Murie Lodge began in November 2001 and will be completed in the summer of 2003. The existing lodges at NCTC have been overbooked since the facility opened in 1997 and many students have been forced to reside off-campus during training or have been unable to schedule courses at NCTC. Funds for the new lodge were requested in the President's budget and appropriated by Congress in 2001. This fourth lodge will be the largest on the conservation campus with 75 rooms for students. NCTC Director, Rick Lemon said, "this new lodge brings the overnight capacity in line with the classroom capacity, thus allowing full utilization of the facility in addressing the conservation learning needs of the country."

The three existing 50-room lodges are named after conservation heroes Jay N. "Ding" Darling, Aldo Leopold, and Rachel Carson. The Murie Lodge was named after consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Did you know?



Lee LeBlanc, artist of the 1973 duck stamp, began his career drawing Daffy Duck cartoons before he created this painting of Steller's Eider.

created this painting of Steller's Eider.

Fish & Wildlife Honors

Service's Heritage Committee, a national coordinating committee for projects involving FWS history. Heritage Committee Chairman Dale Hall explained the decision: "Olaus Murie was the epitome of Fish and Wildlife Service employee dedication. For twenty four years he and his loving partner, Mardy, worked under the most demanding environments and chronicled the life forms and beauty of a the Alaskan and Rocky Mountain wilderness. Yet they never complained. Protection of natural resources was the only reward either of them ever wanted. This recognition of their lifelong work is a fitting tribute to them and to Fish and Wildlife Service employees everywhere."

When we attain a new understanding of something in the field of science, the thoughtful scientist is filled with wonder and a degree of reverence for what we may only partially understand.

Olaus Murie

Near the end of his life Olaus succinctly described the joys and inspirations of a biologist and conservationist: "Sun and moon and stars, the northern lights, the rising and the setting, day and night, summer and winter—the pageant of the North. All this and its precious wild creatures, I have known. And I now also know how greatly privileged I have been."

*Mark Madison, Service Historian
Shepherdstown, West Virginia*

Len McDaniel was chosen as the 2001 recipient of the Hammerstrom Award by the Prairie Grouse Technical Council who established the award in honor of Fred and Fran Hammerstrom, pioneers of prairie grouse research and management. The award recognizes those who have made significant contributions in prairie grouse research, management or other support programs which have enhanced the welfare of one or more species of prairie grouse in a particular state or region. McDaniel recently retired as refuge biologist for the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge in Nebraska. He was recognized for his management of grasslands on the 72,000 acre refuge for the benefit of sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chickens.

Affiliated Graphics, the printer of *Birdscapes*, won the "Printing Industries of America—The Premier Print Awards 2001 Certificate of Merit" for the Service's publication. The certificate says, "The Premier Print Award goes to those firms who demonstrate a unique ability to create visual masterpieces."

Transitions... Who's Coming and Going

Dr. John Galvez, a fishery biologist who has worked 10 years for the Service, has been selected as the new project leader for the Maryland Fisheries Resource Office in Annapolis. Most recently, Galvez worked for the Service's Gloucester Office of Fishery Assistance in Virginia as a fishery biologist and assistant project leader.

Teresa Woods is the new Special Assistant for Ecosystem Approach in Region 3. Woods currently serves as Project Leader of the Southeast Alaska Field Office in Juneau, Alaska. Teresa also serves as Southeast Alaska Eco-team leader and has represented Region 7 on the National Ecosystem Implementation Team. In 1995 Teresa was selected as one of the Service's Unusually Outstanding Employees.

Joan Guilfoyle has been selected to be the Chief of Information and Education for the National Park Service's Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. Joan has spent many years working in the Region 3 External Affairs Office. She has worked on Service issues such as the whooping crane reintroduction, the karner blue butterfly Habitat Conservation Plan and the Lake Erie water snake.

Mitch Ellis, Refuge Manager at Imperial National Wildlife Refuge, the new Wildlife Branch Chief in the Natural Resource Division in Refuge System Headquarters.

Robert Jess has been selected to manage J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Florida. Jess, a ten-year veteran of the agency, has spent his entire Service career working for the refuge system. His most recent job was as Assistant Refuge Supervisor in the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, overseeing all aspects of refuge management.

Continued on page 14

Transitions...

Who's Coming and Going

(continued)

Dan Stinnett has been named field supervisor for the Service's Ecological Services Field Office in Bloomington, Minnesota. Stinnett, with 25 years experience with the Service, joined the 11-member Twin Cities office staff. Stinnett comes to the Twin Cities Field Office from the Service's Big Rivers/Great Lakes Regional Office in Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

James D. (Donny) Browning, a 23-year Service veteran, is the new Refuge Manager for the Savannah Coastal Refuge Complex, with offices in Savannah, Georgia. Browning comes to the job at Savannah after two years as the Regional Supervisor of the National Wildlife Refuges in Arizona and New Mexico

Andrew Hammond, an 11-year Service veteran, is the new manager at Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge in Jena, Louisiana. Hammond comes to the job after four years at the North Louisiana Refuges Complex near Farmerville, where he served most recently as Refuge Manager for Upper Ouachita National Wildlife Refuge.

The Service has hired **Fernando Nunez-Garcia**, a 14-year Service veteran, as the Project Leader for the recovery of the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot, a species endemic to Puerto Rico. Mr. Nunez-Garcia, a native of Aibonito, Puerto Rico, has been studying and working on the recovery of the species since 1981. Nunez-Garcia comes to the job following a 6-month detail at the Vieques National Wildlife Refuge.

Dwight Cooley has been selected to manage Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge near Decatur, Alabama. Cooley, a 21-year veteran of the agency, has spent the last 14 years of his Service career working within the refuge system, after working in Ecological Services for the first seven years. His most recent job was as Deputy Refuge Manager at the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge.

The Service selected **Oscar Diaz** as the first manager of Vieques National Wildlife Refuge in the Caribbean Islands. The new refuge was acquired by the Service in May 2001. Since 1999, Diaz served as the Fish and Wildlife Conservationist at the largest U.S. Naval Station in the world, Roosevelt Roads in Ceiba, Puerto Rico.

Jay Slack, a 10-year Service veteran, is the new Field Supervisor for South Florida. Slack's new position includes management responsibility for Everglades restoration. For the past four and a half years, Slack has served as the Service's Deputy State Supervisor for Florida.

In Memoriam...

Gordon W. Watson, 76, passed away in November. After service in the Army during WWII, Watson began his career as a Wildlife Research Biologist with the Service's River Basin Studies Field Office in Billings, Montana. In 1952, he arrived in Alaska as a pilot-biologist for the Service, assigned to conduct the initial wildlife studies on the proposed Susitna River Hydropower Project. He was the Fisheries Management Agent for the Yukon-Kuskokwim- Arctic Commercial Fisheries, and served as the Project Leader for the Service's evaluation of the proposed Rampart Canyon Dam and Reservoir. In 1959, Gordon and his observer, Donald B. Thornton, disappeared in the Brooks Range aboard a Service aircraft he was piloting. After an intensive 5-day search, they were rescued by Earl "Red" Dodge. In 1961, he transferred to Juneau, Alaska, as the first Regional Ecological Services Field Supervisor. Gordon returned to Anchorage in 1969 as the first Area Director for the Alaska Region.

Retired Service pilot and special agent **George "Skip" Lacey**, 54, died in January, in Fallston, Maryland, when a pickup crossed the center line and hit his car. He was driving home to Parkton from weekend duty with the Maryland Air National Guard. After retiring from the Service in 1997, Lacey continued flying aerial surveys for the Service and for states. He was the only fixed-wing vendor pilot in Region 5 certified to fly below 500 feet for migratory bird and law enforcement surveys. Lacey also provided aviation training for several flyway biologists. Lacey began his career with the Service on Halloween Day, 1977, when he



In Memoriam. Skip Lacey is seen here just prior to his retirement from the Service in 1997 and having completed an aerial surveillance flight along the Chesapeake Bay. He is standing on the Service's Cessna 185 Amphibian located at the airport in Salisbury, Maryland. FWS photo: Richard Perry.

joined classmate Terry Tarr, now deputy ARD for law enforcement in Region 5, and 26 others at special agent basic training in Glynco, Georgia. Lacey worked in Illinois and Maryland. He had also worked for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and for U.S. Customs. "Skip knew the Chesapeake Bay, with its thousands of miles of shoreline and tributaries, as no other pilot did," Rick Perry, Richmond, Virginia, special agent in charge, said in a eulogy at Lacey's funeral. "Bald eagle recovery in Maryland, Virginia and Delaware benefitted from his dedication to the aerial Bald Eagle Project. His law enforcement surveillance resulted in thousands of apprehensions for migratory bird violations. He was known nationwide by agents as an expert pilot, and he was recognized by the Department of the Interior for flying many thousands of hours without a mishap or accident."

Fish & Wildlife... In Brief

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Conference, 2002

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Conference will be September 24–26, 2002 in Baltimore, Maryland. This conference will allow people to share critical information regarding habitat conditions and science, and restoration tools and techniques. Attendees are from agencies, conservation groups, firms, universities and citizens groups. For more information on registration, contact Chesapeake Bay Watershed Conference, c/o Hannah Kirchner, POB 144, Paoli, IN 47454; 812/723 0088, <hannahk@kiva.net>. Call for papers information is available at <www.potomac.org>.

Retirees to Meet in Spearfish, South Dakota, May 17–19, 2002.

The fourth annual reunion of retired Service colleagues is shaping up to be a really big event. So far over 100 retirees plus spouses are planning to attend. The retirees will join the Service's celebration of the 130th anniversary of the Fishery Resources Program at D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery. A series of workshops addressing topics such as updated retiree benefits, financial planning for the retired, wildlife photography and fly tying is planned. Information about the retiree weekend celebration is available by contacting retiree event coordinators Jerry Grover at 503/684 1809 or <groverjerry.judy@att.net> or Denny Holland at 1 877/831 5591 or <dholland@intercom.net>.

Refuge Stepping Stones Receive Acclaim

The American Bird Conservancy recently recognized 183 national wildlife refuges as Globally Important Bird Areas. The conservancy named 500 sites throughout the world as lands vital to the conservation of wild birds and their habitats and will soon produce a book describing each site, its specific value and species information. According to ABC President George Fenwick, "Being named as a Globally Important Bird Area benefits your sites by focusing national publicity on their value to birds, thereby attracting more visitors and potentially leading to increased funding." The Service received this recognition as a direct result of the important conservation efforts of Refuge System employees nationwide.

Service Wide Engineering Workshop.

The Division of Engineering conducted the first ever gathering of Service-wide engineering staff at a comprehensive workshop held in November, 2001, in Shepherdstown West Virginia. The workshop—attended by 72 engineers, architects, and landscape architects— included presentations and small group sessions focused on customer satisfaction, team dynamics, conflict resolution, and a uniform project management process. As reflected in workshop evaluation forms, the participants viewed the session as most valuable in terms of building better relationships with clients and networking with their counterparts in other Regional Engineering Offices. One participant remarked, "... excellent speakers, good organization of classes, excellent presentations and productive but fun, after-class activities. Keep it going annually or bi-annually."

U.S. Seeks Input for National Report on Sustainable Forests

The United States government is currently preparing its first National Report on Sustainable Forests. The USDA Forest Service will lead a collaborative effort with twelve federal agencies to gather and analyze information for this historic report. The process of collecting and assessing data for the report is underway and public input is being solicited to help ensure that the concerns and interests of non-federal entities are considered. The report outline is available on the internet for comment <<http://www.fs.fed.us/sustained/index.html>>.

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's 20th Annual National Conference will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, at the Egan Center, April 29–May 2, 2002. For complete information visit the Society's website at <www.nafws.org> or contact the national office at 303/466 1725 and request a brochure.

National Wetlands Conservation Award 2002—reestablished and soliciting nominees.

The National Wetlands Conservation Awards have been reestablished for 2002. This award, which began in 1990, is an excellent vehicle for recognizing our private sector partners for development, enhancement and restoration of wetlands across our nation. Previously the responsibility of Federal Aid, the award is now managed by the Division of Bird Habitat Conservation. Please note that these awards are for our private sector partners, not government entities. Feel free to submit your nomination to your Regional Office by April 15th. The National Office Awards will be presented in July at the First Day of Sale and Signing Ceremony event for the Duck Stamp program.

Clarification

Editorial changes to the article, Service Takes an Unconventional Approach to Conserving Bog Turtle Habitat (Oct./Nov./Dec. 2001) resulted in an error. The article inferred that Service biologists use trees in creating bog turtle habitat. In fact, trees are never used to create or restore bog turtle habitat.

Editorial changes made to "Exploring Our Past, A Prologue to Pelican Island" (Oct./Nov./Dec. 2001) resulted in error. The stated "Bird Protection Committee" and "model law" were part of the American Ornithologist's Union, not the Audubon Society.

A Message from Steve Williams

I'd like to begin with a thank you. In the course of my career, I have changed jobs four times, and the warm welcome that I have received from Fish and Wildlife Service employees is very much appreciated. I'd like to especially recognize Marshall Jones for the dedication he has shown and the sacrifices he has made this past year. He has done a tremendous job leading the agency during the transition and I value his support and advice. He deserves thanks from all of us, and I am especially grateful.

I am also grateful to President George W. Bush and Interior Secretary Gale A. Norton. My appointment as Service Director is both an honor and a privilege. I proudly accept it, yet I am humbled by the magnitude of the responsibility and the challenges that lie ahead. I believe both the President and the Secretary will provide me with the support needed to lead us in the right direction.

Where do I think this agency should go in the future? Before I can speak to the details, I need time to meet staff and to understand the agency's programs. That said, I do come to the job with a few specific goals in mind.

First, we must improve and restore existing partnerships, and also develop new ones. Throughout the Service's history, major conservation successes have been made possible by joining with States, industry, private landowners, conservation organizations, and the sportsmen and sportswomen of this country who provided financial and political support. I realize that

the Service's resources are spread thin by Congressional mandates, judiciary actions, and the demands of the public, but it is worth the effort to reach out to both traditional and non-traditional constituencies. I do not believe that we should abandon those that first helped establish the Service and that desperately want to continue to work with us to conserve fish and wildlife.

Second, the Service must restore its credibility with Congress and the public. Debates over Federal Aid reform, endangered species issues, and water-related issues have strained our relationships on Capitol Hill and in areas of the country. As a first step to repair our reputation, we must eliminate the correspondence backlog and make sure that our responses to Congressional and to constituent requests are both prompt and accurate. Additionally, I suggest we become better listeners. Understanding an opposing viewpoint is a tremendous conflict resolution skill. Taking other perspectives into account helps one see the big picture and develop a balanced response that is sensitive to all points of view. By all means, we should advocate for fish and wildlife, but we must also make sure that the "juice is worth the squeeze," and that efforts to win an individual battle do not cost us the war.

Last, we must demonstrate honesty and integrity—two traits directly related to credibility. As biologists, law enforcement officers, refuge managers, field staff, and administrators, we must be honest with

each other and with the public. Honesty leads to integrity which leads to credibility. Our leadership role as the world's premier fish and wildlife agency depends on our credibility.

The Service faces a myriad of daunting issues. They may seem overwhelming at times, but each challenge offers an opportunity. After the short time I have spent at the Service, I am even more optimistic that the professionalism and dedication of Service staff will lead us to conquer these challenges and turn opportunity into long term conservation success. I look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months and to helping us make the most of those opportunities. It is an honor and privilege to work alongside you.

Steve Williams



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Deadline for May/June 2002 issue:

April 1, 2002