

OUT & About



The Pacific Region Outreach Newsletter



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- Fall — Fire
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Is Yours a Quality Hunt Program?

Four-step approach can help evaluate a hunting program

By John Gahr

At Mid-Columbia River NWR Complex we've operated a waterfowl hunt program for almost 50 years. Whether your program is in its infancy or decades old, it's important to gauge whether you're providing safe, quality hunts. It's easy to talk to a smiling hunter at the check station and come away with a slap on the back, coupled with "what a great hunt." But does this really mean your program is successful?

In his session on hunting at the Visitor Services Workshop at the National Conservation Training Center in December 2001, John Schomaker posed the question "How do we know we are really doing a good job?" and then offered a simple approach for determining whether you really have an effective hunting program.

Schomaker suggested four steps to make the evaluation:

DESCRIBE A QUALITY HUNTING PROGRAM

Begin by determining what makes up a quality hunting program. Some elements may be safety, ethical behavior, availability, population management, positive reflection on refuge management, uncrowded conditions, reasonable challenge and opportunity, minimal habitat impacts, minimal conflict with other uses, and a stewardship message. You can get further guidance from the draft Service Manual chapter (605 FW 2) on elements to include in your own program description.



Photo by: USFWS

See HUNT PROGRAM... Page 16

A Newcomer's Perspective

Workshop offers tips and contacts galore

By Kolleen Irvine

I got on the plane to attend the first Visitor Services Workshop at the National Conservation Training Center with eager anticipation and a lot of questions. What helpful tidbits could I glean from sessions like "Human Dimensions and Visitor Services or National Trends in Outdoor Recreation?" And how would I feel, a relative newcomer to visitor services, meeting 249 of my peers?

What I found was a group of friendly, dedicated professionals, some so new the ink wasn't yet dry on their SF 50s, and a workshop full of information about everything from

budgets and partnerships to building a visitor center. Here are five things I learned:

CONTACTS! CONTACTS!

One big payoff was the exposure to people from across the nation. I tried to meet as many as possible at meals and seminars, in the lounge, walking to and from places, even in the gym. Sooner or later I'll meet some of them again, see their names on a memo or publication, or need their expertise. I've already spoken with a few them since returning from the workshop.

See A NEWCOMER'S ... Page 10

OUT & About

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

STAFF

Editor
Jeanne Clark, Stone Lakes NWR
Design
Kathie Nute, Western Type

SUBMISSIONS

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 E-mail or 3-1/2 inch floppy 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.

Submit articles to Jeanne Clark:
Stone Lakes NWR
1624 Hood Franklin Road
Elk Grove, CA 95758
Phone: 916/775-4421
Fax: 916/775-4407
E-mail: jeanne_clark@fws.gov

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Spring	April 1
Summer	May 15
Fall	August 15
Winter	November 15

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

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REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Make Visitor Contacts Count

Planning for visitor services is a priority for the next century

By Rick Coleman

This winter's Visitor Services and Communication Workshop at the National Conservation Training Center provided the impetus for this special 16-page issue of *Out & About*. Most articles in the following pages include information related to featured workshop speakers and sessions.

We thought this theme was timely because as our nation's population is becoming more urban, personal experiences with nature are often limited to visits to federal or state wildlife areas and parks.

In the future, the degree of public support for wildlife conservation will largely depend on positive visitor experiences at our national wildlife refuges, national fish hatcheries, and other natural areas. "Virtual visits" to these areas, via the internet, will also contribute to public understanding, appreciation, and support for wildlife issues and conservation.

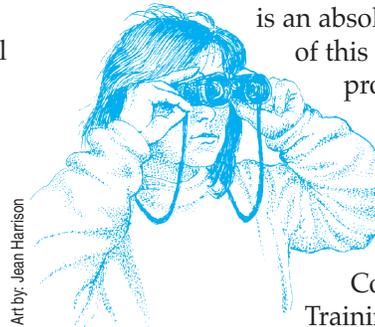
We need to acknowledge these opportunities and take the lead in providing the best visitor experiences we can, sustaining the positive personal experiences with nature commonly enjoyed by previous generations.

In the past, many believed the work of conservation was limited to biological sciences and habitat management. They often considered public use programs to be an optional collateral duty. We enjoyed a large measure of public support for wildlife conservation, with or without specific services provided to the public on our lands, since most had personal wildlife experiences in their more rural life styles.

Today we can no longer take this for granted. The public needs to experience nature to really support it, placing new demands for visitor services on our refuges and hatcheries.

Accommodating these needs poses significant challenges for land management agencies. Our job is to provide quality visitor services while minimizing their impact on the natural resources we are charged to protect.

This will require the combined talents of all public use specialists, biologists, and managers. The visitor services professional



Art by: Jean Harrison

is an absolutely vital part of this team in providing quality planning and delivery of public use programs. The National Conservation Training Center

recognized this need by hosting its highly successful, first-ever Visitor Services Workshop. It included inspiring speakers and information-packed sessions on many aspects of visitor planning.

Several of those sessions and Region 1 experiences are featured in this issue of *Out & About*. Read about future planning in two complementary articles on pages 8 and 9 about Social Scientist Gary Machlis' thought-provoking session on future visitors. Find out about the environmental education program, *Rhythms of the Refuge*, or what it takes to keep your volunteer program effective.

We also need to plan for virtual visitors. Recent surveys on internet use indicate that e-citizens are visiting federal web sites far more than other agency sites. Tourism and recreation goals top the list in information sought, netting 77 percent of all the government web site transactions.

Clearly the public is visiting our websites to meet their needs. Our websites need to reflect the best in interpretive and information technology talents, combining visual arts, interpretive skills, and electronic programming. Just like on-the-ground experiences, we need to make these cyberspace visits count.

We have a long tradition of working to create science and habitat management benefits, with some startling and well-documented successes. Now it's time to put the same type of energy, resources, and talent into visitor services, which should yield great conservation benefits and big payoffs in the century to come. **O**

Rick Coleman is the assistant regional director for External Affairs.

Rhythms of the Refuge

New program can help develop environmental education at your refuge

By Dawn Grafe and Diane Emmons

Even though there are a wealth of environmental education programs, developing one tailored to your refuge can be a daunting task — unless you have tools to guide you through the process. One of the high points of NCTC’s Visitor Services Workshop was the chance to learn about *Rhythms of the Refuge*, a new program being piloted at several refuges.

Rhythms of the Refuge is designed to help you develop a new environmental education program or modify an existing one. The end result is a program that fits the needs of your refuge and the community.

TWO COMPONENTS

Perhaps the most attractive part of *Rhythms of the Refuge* is its built-in flexibility and user-friendly organization. It has two components: a “Planning Guide for Environmental Education” and an “Educator’s Guide.”

The Educator’s Guide includes support and background information for teachers, pre-visit activities, on-site activities, and post-visit activities. An electronic copy of this guide is provided with the printed text so it can be easily modified.

The Planning Guide component helps you design a program and modify the Educator’s Guide to meet your refuge’s needs. It takes you through four steps:

FOUR STEPS

Gather Information — In a one-day workshop, the refuge staff discusses the status of the environmental education program, relates the conservation role of the refuge to environmental education, inventories the available facilities and resources available for the program, and begins to review the Educator’s Guide.

Develop program with partners — The refuge staff teams up with educators in the local community to determine the topics, messages, objectives, and structure of the program. The team uses the Educator’s Guide as a template for developing a personalized Educator’s Guide that is unique to the refuge and supports the Service’s mission.

Customizing the Educator’s Guide involves adding, modifying, and deleting background information and activities. Highlighted topics could include waterfowl biology, wetland ecology, endangered species, and more.

Implement the program — Through educator workshops and field trips, the refuge staff helps train teachers to use the refuge as an outdoor classroom. The refuge staff may assist with the field trips, but do not need to lead them.

Evaluate and modify — To ensure the program is valuable to the refuge and educators, evaluation components for teacher workshops, field trips, and the overall program are included in the last section of the planning guide.

Rhythms of the Refuge is being developed in Region 6 with the help of NCTC and the Washington Office Division of Refuges. Diane Emmons, the project lead, is helping to pilot the program at two sites in Region 6, and at Oregon Coast NWR Complex.

The hope is for *Rhythms of the Refuge* to be available nationally in the next year. For more information, or to become a pilot site, please contact Diane Emmons at 303/236-8145, ext. 606.

Dawn Grafe is a refuge operations specialist at Oregon Coast NWRC. Diane Emmons is refuge program specialist in the Division of Education and Visitor Services, Region 6. A more complete summary of Diane Emmons’ session is presented in the Spring 2002 issue of NCTC Journal.



Adapt Rhythms of the Refuge to your audience.

“The end result is a program that fits the needs of your refuge and the community.”

Photo by: Genelle Treaster

Through the Lens of the Beholder

Big interest in increased viewing and photography access

By Dave Menke

“88 percent feel that minimizing user conflicts was important when developing programs and facilities.”

At a lot of refuges and hatcheries, the eyepiece people are using is more often attached to a camera, spotting scope, or binoculars than a rifle stock. Developing a new wildlife observation or wildlife photography blind, platform or other facility can be easy and inexpensive.

Volunteers have helped construct and maintain all of the nine photo blinds at Tule Lake and Lower Klamath Refuges. Tule Lake recently received a matching grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Wild Birds Unlimited to provide all-weather wheelchair access to one refuge photo blind. Volunteer labor was used, in part, to provide the refuge “match.”

As two of the Big Six priority uses on refuges, there is a growing need to assess and upgrade wildlife viewing and photography programs. While preparing the session I gave at the December 2001 Visitor Services Workshop at NCTC, I asked a number of

wildlife photographers and wildlife watchers to evaluate the current state of refuge wildlife observation and photography programs, needs, and facilities.

The respondents were all experienced with wildlife observation and photography opportunities on refuges. Their responses provide an excellent starting point for refuges looking to beef up or add to these programs. The eighteen responses I received are summarized as follows:

- Large majorities of respondents (83 percent photography and 89 percent observation) feel that more opportunities and programs should be developed on refuges.
- 95 percent feel that “minimizing wildlife disturbance” should be a major consideration in developing programs.
- Most (83 percent) feel that programs and facilities should be available to both motor vehicle users and those on foot.
- Only 18 percent agreed or strongly agreed that these programs should be free of charge. The majority were neutral or supportive of fees for these programs and 79 percent agreed that fees should be required for use of “specialized facilities,” such as photo blinds.
- 88 percent feel that minimizing user conflicts was important when developing programs and facilities.
- Respondents agreed, for the most part (55 percent), that refuges should encourage use by professional tour and photography guides.
- 89 percent feel that refuges should accommodate these uses in otherwise closed areas if appropriate measures are taken to minimize wildlife disturbance.

I asked the respondents to rate certain considerations when developing a wildlife observation or wildlife photography program or facility. Here’s what they said:

- Large majorities (particularly photographers) feel it is important to be close to wildlife.



Volunteer puts finishing touches on a wheelchair-accessible photo blind.



Photo blind with view of two perching bald eagles.

Photos by: Dave Menke

See **THROUGH THE LENS...** Page 5

Meet Amy J. Gaskill

Outreach Specialist for Ecological Services and Fisheries

By Amy Gaskill, APR*



I come to the Fish and Wildlife Service with a background in public relations and outreach from the U.S. Coast Guard. My 12 years there exposed me to the 1995 North Atlantic commercial fishing crisis, a training stint

in the Mediterranean to help other nations establish a similar agency, and the chance to look into the hopeful eyes of hundreds of Haitian and Cuban migrants in 1993, whom we saved from unseaworthy vessels in unforgiving seas.

It was the exposure to my public relations counterparts from other federal agencies during several oil spill responses that fostered my interest in joining the Fish and Wildlife Service team. I have deep environmental

convictions and strongly support the Service's mission.

My new role as the outreach specialist for Ecological Services/Fisheries allows me the opportunity to develop an internal education program to promote understanding between the different programs. I feel that strong internal communications are extremely powerful and important if we are to uphold the Service's mission. I'm also excited about establishing a database of the partnerships already formed and to document the potential for others. I promise to hit the road and visit every field unit I possibly can, during my first year, in order to facilitate new ties between programs. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas and questions at 503/231-6874. **O**

**Accredited in Public Relations by the Public Relations Society of America*

Through the Lens...

Continued from Page 4

- Large majorities feel it is important to minimize wildlife and user conflicts when developing programs and facilities.
- Majorities feel that observation and photography should occur in a natural setting, providing a good chance to observe/photograph wildlife behavior.
- Respondents feel that quality should take priority over quantity when developing programs and facilities.
- A large majority feel it is important to screen the observer or photographer from wildlife to avoid disturbance.

Interestingly, it appears that the opinions of this small sample of respondents are consistent with the guidance provided in the draft chapters on Wildlife Observation (605 FW4) and Wildlife Photography (605 FW5) in the Service Manual.

The two manual chapters call for enhanced consideration of these and other "big six" wildlife dependent recreational uses on refuges. They encourage refuge managers to invest resources to provide high quality opportunities. They recognize the desirability

of on-refuge wildlife observation and photography in primitive settings and the natural environment.

The draft chapters also emphasize minimizing wildlife disturbance, encourage ethical behavior, suggest that limitations may be imposed to reduce wildlife or user conflicts, and suggest making opportunities available to a broad spectrum of visitors.

How do your wildlife viewing and photography programs rate with Service guidelines and your visitors? I've also developed a list of questions and considerations to use when planning and evaluating sites for a photography program or facility. These are applicable to wildlife observation programs, as well. If you'd like these, or to see the results of the survey, please contact me by email or call 530/667-2231. Also check out the "Resources" listing on page 10 for additional ideas. **O**

Dave Menke is an outdoor recreation planner at Klamath Basin NWR Complex. Read more about Menke's session in the Spring 2002 issue of NCTC Journal. Illustration by USFWS.

Centennial "Brand" Ready

Our 100th birthday is less than a year away and the new Centennial "brand" is available for your use on news releases, event



announcements, flyers, and other written materials. While you may slightly alter the position of the words "Celebrating a Century of Conservation," all three elements should be used together.

You may download the brand at <http://sii.fws.gov/r9refuges/centennial/bimu.html>



Dr. Ed Espinoza Honored

Dr. Ed Espinoza, a forensic pathologist at the Clark R. Bavin National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory, was honored as this year's recipient of the Guy Bradley Award at the North American Wildlife Conference in Dallas, Texas. The award is presented by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation each year to one or two individuals who are recognized for outstanding achievement in combating wildlife crime.

Espinoza was recognized for his efforts in establishing

reliable and court-accepted forensic protocols that enable national and international wildlife officers to work crime scenes by the examination and comparison of collected evidence, as opposed to having to catch the violators in the act. He has provided this training to numerous wildlife officers and developed a civilian version for representatives at a CITES meeting. Espinoza's outreach skills have also focused on the Laboratory's college student intern volunteer program and have reached as far as Columbia, where he helped train several judges.

Salmon Festival Wins Awards

The internationally-acclaimed Wenatchee River Salmon Festival took home gold, silver and bronze in early March when the festival was honored at the Northwest Festivals & Events Conference in Welches, Oregon. Over 200 delegates representing festivals and events from the Pacific Northwest attended the conference.

Salmon Festival received two Gold Awards for Best Children's Event and Best Environmental Education Event in the state of Washington. A Silver Award was received for T-shirt design and a Bronze Award was received for the festival's newspaper insert.

"It is very meaningful to us to receive these awards," said Corky Broaddus, Executive Director. "They represent the best spirit of partnership between government agencies,

community and volunteers in working towards a common vision of outdoor educational excellence," she said.

This year's festival will be held September 19 - 22 at Leavenworth NFH.

Timing is Everything

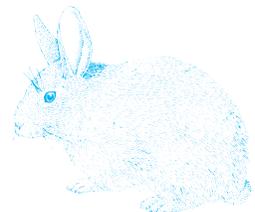
If you're trying to interest the media in your efforts to save an endangered rabbit, when is a good time to have a press conference?

How about the week before Easter?

Before big holidays, news organizations are always looking for good stories that have a holiday hook. So the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office scheduled a press conference on a new captive-breeding program for the endangered riparian brush rabbit on March 27, five days before Easter.

In a region where the Endangered Species Act has not always received good press, the media event yielded positive stories in four Northern California newspapers and three television stations.

The event had several other elements that contributed to its success including great weather, a cute critter, and a compelling story about a "bunny in trouble." But officials believe the holiday timing was critical in making the story a "must" for area news outlets.



Volunteer Management and Care

Workshop provides hints for cultivating these assets

By Amy Hopperstad

Volunteers are a vital thread in the tapestry of our work, supporting many important programs and community relationships. With volunteers making up 20 percent of the Service workforce, it is essential to give care, time, energy, and money to foster these partnerships.

At NCTC's Visitor Services Workshop Rick Lynch, President of Lynch Associates, gave a dynamic presentation full of practical tips for improving and reinforcing volunteer programs. He covered four topics that shed light on volunteer needs and expectations.

KNOW VOLUNTEER MOTIVATIONS

People usually volunteer for a combination of reasons. Some common motivations include: Meet new people and friends, try out a new career field and gain experience, get recognition, feel useful, learn something new, help solve a community problem, meet potential employers, spend quality time with family by volunteering together, fulfill a moral duty, and have fun.

Understanding volunteer motivations allows the volunteer coordinator to create jobs that meet these expectations. Fulfilling expectations improves volunteer retention and dedicated support for your station.

THINK ABOUT JOB DESIGN

Volunteer jobs should not only be something each wants to do, but must be meaningful for the refuge or hatchery. Fulfilling a necessary function and knowing the contribution's value toward achieving a goal helps create ownership.

CREATE CONNECTEDNESS

Call people by name — it's the most important single connector. Know the person's background and interests. Implement volunteer suggestions whenever possible. Validate your volunteers; thank you go a long way. Share information and plans freely. Use name tags, badges, and pins to identify each individual as part of the team. Invite employees and volunteers to social activities.

GIVE RECOGNITION

It is extremely important to recognize your volunteers. Give recognition frequently, use a variety of methods, be appropriate, be honest, be timely, and be personal — don't just recognize the work.

As a new volunteer coordinator, I've been flabbergasted by our volunteers' backgrounds and knowledge. What a gold mine! I've discovered that several are retired science professors and teachers, master nurserymen, former and current agency environmental program supervisors, professional photographers, and even a professional recreation guide!

To better tap this talent pool and find a niche for everyone, I developed a new volunteer sign up form that better defines many areas for helping out. As a result I've seen a big increase in volunteer participation and the return of many old timers who were looking for different duties.

Volunteers are your active link to the community. They are both front line and behind-the-scenes workers. They accelerate accomplishments and contribute new ideas. They provide needed skills and work when the staff is limited. They are fun to work with. Yes, they take time, but they often prove to be the motherlode of many refuge and hatchery operations!

Amy Hopperstad is an outdoor recreation planner at Stone Lakes NWR.

"Volunteers make up 20 percent of the Service workforce..."



Photo by: Amy Hopperstad

Be sweet to your volunteers! FWS logo was an edible rice paper silkscreen.

More Questions Than Answers

Keynote speaker Gary Machlis provokes future thinking

By Jean Harrison

“Effective managers of the 21st century will be futurists.”

Acceleration. Accumulation. Convergence. These three trends identified by Dr. Gary Machlis, chief social scientist with the National Park Service and keynote speaker at the Visitor Services Workshop, could give us a different look at future visitors at our refuges and hatcheries.

How do these trends relate to visitor services professionals? They provoke us to think differently, to ask questions, to try something new.

According to Machlis, effective managers of the 21st century will be futurists.

ACCELERATION

Our life styles and concept of time have accelerated. We expect answers and information faster than ever; we cram more work and experiences into one day.

Future visitors may want to know what a thirty-minute visit will “buy” compared to a one-hour visit. We should plan to accommodate these short stays, says Machlis, poking fun at the National Park Service tendency to want “to lock them in the park until they get the entire message.” We should take his humor seriously!

He suggests we promote refuges as “oases of contemplation, places to pause.” What types of opportunities can we provide to visitors to slow them down so they can connect with the resources around them and truly experience them?

ACCUMULATION

The future is built on layers of the past and present, noted Machlis. There is more and more infrastructure. Does this set up an expectation on the part of our visitors, or could we shape a more meaningful experience with less?

There is also more information available to our visitors. They constantly accumulate knowledge about our issues and the natural, cultural, historical and political world.

Do they need more information from us, or perhaps another type of experience to get them to care *about* natural resources so they care *for* them?

CONVERGENCE

Convergence, Machlis described, is the coming together of formerly disparate goods or services. He shared an example from his hometown of Moscow, Idaho, where you can buy both ammunition and a latté in the same small store. This may mean that we will need to determine what new services our visitors will want and whether it is appropriate to provide them.

This line of thinking prompted me to ask Machlis whether, given the trends of acceleration in time and visits and the accumulation of infrastructure, are we placing too many interpretive panels on the ground?

Machlis suggested “yes,” proposing that we encourage a sense of mystery and discovery in our visitors. What you hold back and allow visitors to discover can have the strongest impact.

He suggested interpretive-free zones where people can discover and experience the resource for themselves without our filters and interference. Our challenge is to do this in a way that allows people to connect with the resources so they support our agency.

Aside from these trends, Machlis offered two suggestions. First: read and think voraciously in a non-linear manner, because the world is non-linear.

How do you think non-linearly? Read *Popular Mechanics* (every resource management challenge is first addressed here); the *Wall Street Journal* (to know who has the power now and how it is distributed) and *Rolling Stone* (to find out where our society is headed).

His second recommendation, stemming from his Park Service experience, is to “harden the front country and save the back country.” Pave trails and build facilities and parking lots to form an area that handles heavy visitation; let this “front country” take the brunt of abuse from cars and hiking boots... so we can save the back country! **O**

Jean Harrison is chief of the Division of Visitor Services and Communications. Illustrations on pages

8 and 9 by Ken Morris.

Thinking about the Future

Key social trends affecting future visitation

By Susan Saul

Popular *Mechanics*, *Rolling Stone* and *The Wall Street Journal*. What do these publications have in common? They represent wide-ranging thinking and lots of data that help to spotlight trends in population, technology, economics, environment and culture, says Dr. Gary Machlis, chief social scientist for the National Park Service.

These trends will pose significant challenges to visitor services in coming decades and profoundly influence the future of national wildlife refuges. Speaking at the Visitor Services Workshop in December 2001, Machlis said that the ability to monitor these trends, respond effectively, and provide visitor services for the long term will be the hallmarks of future public lands managers.

Some trends with implications for visitor services and refuge management:

- **Demography** — As the U.S. population increases nearly nine percent by 2010, so will visitation to national wildlife refuges. The population of Americans age 55 years and older is expected to be the fastest growing group in the next decade; they may have more leisure time and financial stability but also unique recreational behavior patterns. Longer life expectancy will increase the size and relative proportion of America's older population.
- **Technology** — Increasing oil prices may affect short-term visitation. More people may use e-mail rather than the telephone when seeking visitor information. More visitors will use the Internet to access information about refuge regulations, facilities, visitor services information, and interpretation before their actual arrival at a refuge.
- **Economics** — Increases in disposable income may increase willingness to pay for entrance fees, permits, and other services. The ability to work from home may allow more leisure time for recreational activities. Increased global tourism will lead to more foreign visitors.

- **Environment** — Rapid global population growth will increase pressure on refuges to meet other resource needs. Increased pollutants can affect air quality and viewsheds, in turn affecting visitation rates. Intense development on land adjacent to refuges will pose significant management challenges.
- **Culture** — Increased enrollments in learning institutions may influence the use of refuges as demand for services by educational groups changes. Rising educational level is an important consideration in the design of interpretive information and outreach programs.

As workers are granted more leave time by employers, visitation to refuges may increase. Changes in the duration and frequency of visits can affect resources, services and facilities.

Increased book reading can broaden public knowledge about fish and wildlife conservation. Increased use of home shopping may influence ways in which Friends groups provide information and generate sales. Increasing demand for outdoor recreation will require additional facilities, services, interpretive media and regulations. Experiences at theme and amusement parks may alter visitor expectations when visiting refuges.

Machlis says refuge managers need to be prepared for a dramatically different world than the one in which the Refuge System evolved. He recommends that they be cognizant of the past, read widely to be aware of emerging trends, and keep asking "What does this mean to me as a manager?"

For more information, see "A Look Ahead: Key Social and Environmental Forecasts Relevant to the National Park Service" at www.nps.gov/socialscience/waso/products.htm

Susan Saul is an outreach specialist for refuges in External Affairs.

"Increasing demand for outdoor recreation will require additional facilities, services, interpretive media, and regulations."

Upcoming Events

Return of the Terns

When: June 30
Where: Alameda, CA
Contact: East Bay Regional Park
510/521-6887
www.ebparks.org

Washington Water Weeks

When: August 31 - October 20
tentative date for 2002
Where: Statewide
Contact: 360/943-3642

Nisqually Watershed Festival

When: September 28
Where: Olympia, WA
Contact: Sheila McCartan
360/753-9467

A Newcomer's...

Continued from Page 1

EXPAND YOUR NICHE

I attended several seminars for programs we want to improve or don't yet have. The environmental education session, *Rhythms on the Refuge* (see page 4), provided a short draft planning template I could use to jazz up our station's existing program. I used the template when I returned and had a few questions, so I called Diane Emmons (contacts!), who developed the guide, and she sent me the program to review and/or pilot at my refuge.

THINK AND READ VORACIOUSLY

Dr. Gary E. Machlis, Chief Social Scientist with the National Park Service, advised us to think and read voraciously. And not just environmental journals and educational publications. He suggested reading a wide range of publications to learn about what is really going on in the world.

Being a slight disbeliever, I picked up *Popular Mechanics* at the airport on my way home. The first article I saw was about ATVs. I hadn't realized they were so popular, and thought about the problems they could pose on refuges. Because of this, I wasn't surprised a few months ago when we received a call from people wanting to use ATVs on our refuge.

VOLUNTEER FOR SOMETHING

Volunteer to do something you haven't done before. (Be sure to get your supervisor's

"okay" if it's work-related.) The education you'll get from going outside of your skill zone will bolster your confidence and teach you new ways of accomplishing goals. I did this by volunteering to coordinate an order for the NWR's Centennial mini-blue goose beanie babies.

Over three months and 11,000 blue goose beanie babies later I've learned: 1) a good administrative person is like gold; 2) ask lots of questions because you will inevitably need all of the answers; and 3) the Refuge System has some of the most helpful people you'll ever meet.

BALANCE WILDLIFE AND USER NEEDS

While at the workshop I heard a conversation about how hard it was at a large northern duck refuge to find a place free of people. I heard some interesting ideas about how to improve visitor services by opening an area previously closed to visitors. I also learned about recruiting new visitors through a nationwide campaign at movie theaters promoting the NWR's.

Whether it's a new auto tour route or fishing access, be sure to consider the effects of human disturbance on wildlife when designing visitor programs. Be ready to make adjustments to both protect wildlife and provide quality visitor experiences. **O**

Kolleen Irvine is a refuge officer at Dungeness NWR.

Displays, Exhibits,
and Publications

RESOURCES

Want to Do More for Photographers?

There's help in *Outdoor Photographer* and similar magazines, at www.wildlifewatcher.com (this site has advertised many wildlife viewing and photography opportunities on national wildlife refuges), and at www.klamathnwr.org (see an example of a photo blind leaflet). Be sure to see Dave Menke's article about photography, on page 4.

Media Policies

Check out the Media Services Style Guide to make sure your writing style matches the preferred methods of the Service. Also, take a look at the Handbook for Special Events and Dedications for some interesting dos and don'ts. You can find both resources, as well as a wealth of other information, on the Service's *sii* outreach site. Access this from the "Welcome" portal of Lotus Notes. Click on the FWS Resource Center button on the left, then Intranets, USFWS Intranets, and finally, Service Internal Intranet.

Endangered Species Pages

Need permit information? How about a grant? You can find this and more at three new Endangered Species Program webpages. Find Permits for Native Species at <http://endangered.fws.gov/permits/index.html>. Find Partnering with the Department of Defense at <http://endangered.fws.gov/DOD/index.html>. And see Endangered Species Grants to States, Territories, and Private Landowners at <http://endangered.fws.gov/grants/index.html>. Questions? Contact Julia Bumbaca at 703/358-2390.

Want a Tasty Blue Goose?

In case you want to give the blue goose to your favorite sweet tooth, you can now buy blue goose cookie cutters from the Public Lands Interpretive Association. The 5 x 2¼ inch tin-plated steel cookie cutter sells for about \$.45 each. Contact Lisa Madison at 505/345-9498 for information.

Friends Conference a Hit

First national gathering provides motivation and sharpens skills

By Susan Peruzzi

The first ever National Refuge Friends Conference was held in February of this year. Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Association (SLNWRA) voted unanimously to send a representative to this landmark event. As the association's event coordinator, administrative assistant, and newsletter editor, I was selected to attend.

The SLWNRA has supported this Elk Grove, California refuge in a number of ways. We raised over \$100,000 to build the refuge's first structure, a wildlife viewing platform. We have also helped initiate and administer the refuge's volunteer training program, publish a quarterly newsletter, and assumed management of a large endowment fund to support operations and maintenance of a mitigation bank located within the refuge project area.

The conference provided a perfect opportunity to see if we were doing the right things, and enough of them, to support our refuge. I came to the meeting with a lot of questions: What are other Friends groups doing? What are we allowed to do to lobby for refuge improvements? How can we deal effectively with the media? How can improve fundraising efforts and recruit more supporters? The conference answered these questions and more.

A major conference emphasis was networking, with lots of time available to mingle and get to know other groups. I had a chance to meet with Friends groups from California and the Pacific Northwest, where I learned that support groups were established for widely different reasons and functioned in very different ways. Representatives included board members, docents, and bookstore managers. Many groups were just starting up. Everyone was enthusiastic and friendly.

The conference featured many pre-assigned breakout sessions selected for us based on our conference registration selections. After a rousing welcome from Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton and a highly motivating keynote speech by U.S. Representative Curt Weldon, I went to a fund raising seminar full of suggestions and

handouts we've already starting using. At the media and events meeting I took away solid tips for getting the public and media involved in our events, and borrowed several great ideas for our refuge Centennial event.

On the second day we learned about the Coalition of Associations for Refuge Enhancement (C.A.R.E.), and their efforts to increase funding for the Refuge System by \$100 million. We also learned the proper way to meet with congressional representatives, as many of us had appointments on Capitol Hill the following day. Many of my questions regarding lobbying and how to serve the refuge politically were answered, and I had a very productive meeting with the natural resources staffer for our congressional representative.

The first annual National Refuge Friends Conference was invaluable for me. I learned a lot, made many new contacts, and saw that each group is as different as the refuge it supports. I could see that we each shared a commitment to our wildlands and enthusiasm for the work we do. I especially came away with a greater sense of appreciation of the National Wildlife Refuge System, knowing that Friends group will play a vital role in the future of refuges and hatcheries.

Susan Peruzzi is the administrative assistant for the Stone Lakes NWR Association.

"Many questions regarding lobbying and how to serve the refuge politically were answered..."



Refuge and SLNWRA give canoe tours on Members' Day for fun and to boost interest in refuge restoration projects.

Photo by: Gene Treaster

Shape and Nurture Your Friends Group

Fisheries staff find peers and good advice at workshop

By Cheri Anderson, Kim Strassburg, and Susan Sawyer

“Designate a FWS liaison to bring your Friends group and the Service together.”

A handful of fisheries information and education staff from Region 1 attended the National Visitor Services and Communication Workshop at NCTC last December. At first we felt a little like the proverbial “fish out of water.” However, as we began comparing our education and outreach programs to the rest of the Service, we found many similarities and successes to share, such as our fisheries support group.

Friends of Northwest Hatcheries began as the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery Society in 1994, but has recently gained momentum. With a broader mission and new name, Friends has expanded their reach to include not only the Leavenworth NFH Complex, but also Spring Creek and Carson NFHs in the Columbia River Gorge, and Dworshak and Kooskia NFHs in Idaho.

Among many contributions, the Friends currently operates three interpretive sales outlets, manages grant and other non-profit funds, and provides volunteer support to the Service.

One session at the NCTC workshop, led by volunteering consultant Steve McCurley, focused entirely on Service support groups. McCurley highlighted four major topics to consider when working with support groups. His recommendations echoed the experiences Region 1 Fisheries has had with its Friends.

DEFINE A PURPOSE

Critical to the group’s success is to clearly define why the group exists. This is the time when Friends members and FWS staff agree on the goals and outcomes of the organization. An effective way to accomplish this is to annually integrate the support group’s planning process with your station’s planning regimen.

In February 2002, our Friends hosted their first annual planning retreat. The entire Friends Board of Directors attended and so did four project leaders and five information and education staff representing all seven hatcheries! This combination of attendees was invaluable, helping us to make great strides in exploring future visions and prioritizing the next year’s activities.

RECRUIT

First recruit a small cadre of dedicated individuals who are highly motivated and have the time to give. This small group then becomes the nucleus to recruit others, thus developing the group’s membership.

To gain support and members in the communities of the newly added hatcheries, Friends will be hosting open houses at Spring Creek and Dworshak NFHs early this summer.

Friends will be working with our information and education staff to develop invitation lists, a slide presentation, and special event evenings to attract local supporters.

COMMUNICATE

Communication is the key to success with Friends groups.

Always designate a FWS diplomat/liaison to bring your group and the Service together. Regularly share your station’s activities with them; make them feel a part of the Service.

Information and education staff and project leaders from our seven hatcheries attend Friends meetings to share new education programs and update the group on “hatchery happenings.”

See SHAPE AND NURTURE... Page 13



Photo by: Kim Strassburg

During a retreat hatchery managers help Friends prioritize their upcoming projects.

Partners Fund Fishing Platform

Providing barrier-free access a primary goal

By Steve Bouffard

Minidoka NWR has a reputation for a lot of “greats:” legions of birds, breathtaking scenery, and the chance to pull in two-to-five pound rainbow trout. Thanks to a special partnership, visitors using wheelchairs now have an opportunity to also enjoy great trout fishing at the refuge.

At times fishing is fantastic, but anglers using wheelchairs had no way to get to the water’s edge. Now anglers using wheelchairs have access to one of the more popular fishing spots using a platform completed in summer 2001. The project was designed with nearby parking and a paved, wheelchair-friendly quarter-mile trail to the pier.

“We had a tremendous group of partners to see this through” said Dean Neilsen, Director of the local LIFE, Inc office. LIFE, Inc. (Living Independently For Everyone) is a nonprofit group dedicated to keeping people with all types of disabilities active and independent.

LIFE Inc. and other partners provided matching funds to use for a Service challenge-cost-share grant. Lake Walcott State Park, which manages a state park in the northwest corner of the refuge, was an important partner. So was White Swan Inc. This nonprofit organization from the Fort



The new accessible fishing and viewing pier seeing lots of use.

Hall Indian Reservation, which teaches trades to young adults, did a first class job of building the fishing platform.

The entire project cost \$15,000 and has garnered a huge amount of good will. Get to know groups for those with mobility impairments in your community. We found that ours had a lot of great suggestions and were more than willing to help. Also, see “Designing Accessible Facilities” in the Winter 2000 issue of *Out & About*.

Steve Bouffard is the refuge manager of Minidoka NWR.

Shape and Nurture...

Continued from Page 12

AVOID COMMON PITFALLS

Every friends group has its struggles, but some can be avoided by knowing about common trouble points. Avoid mixed messages by clarifying who speaks for the group and who speaks for the Service.

The more successful a support group, the greater the risk of them inappropriately wanting to steer policy. Avoid policy disagreements by addressing potential issues ahead of time and taking time to get to know your group on a personal basis. Watch for power struggles within the group. Consider establishing term limits and make sure that the FWS does not dominate the group

dynamics. Be sure to always recognize their contributions in as many ways as you can.

Take advantage of the many resources available to help develop or enhance a support group. NCTC offers a course in managing support groups. The National Wildlife Refuge Association offers training. Several websites offer help, too: <http://friends.fws.gov>, <http://volunteers.fws.gov>, and www.refugenet.com.

Cheri Anderson, Kim Strassburg, and Susan Sawyer are interpretation and education specialists at Spring Creek, Leavenworth, and Dworshak Fish Hatchery Complexes respectively.

Oregon Shorebird Festival

When: September 13-15
Where: North Bend, OR
Contact: Cape Arago Audubon Society 541/267-7208

Wenatchee River Salmon Festival

When: September 19-22
Where: Leavenworth, WA
Contact: Corky Broaddus 509/548-6662 ext. 250 www.salmonfest.org

Spring Creek NFH Open House

When: September 21-22
Where: Underwood, WA
Contact: Spring Creek NFH 509/493-1730

National Hunting and Fishing Day

When: September 28
Where: National
Contact: National Shooting Sports Foundation 203/426-1320

Photo by: ????

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“The interpreter must create opportunities for visitors to connect intangible meanings with the tangible resource.”

By Ken Morris

Can you hear me now? . . . Can you hear me now? *Good!*” the bespectacled guy in the wireless-phone ad says. When we plan interpretation at our refuges and hatcheries, we’re likewise trying to “make a connection.”

What’s the ultimate goal of interpretation, really? It’s to help our visitors care about wildlife. Ultimately this is far more important than being able to recognize a great egret, or know what draw-down is. And if people care, they are more likely to comply with regulations, or remember what a great egret is. So, how do you develop an interpretive program or exhibit that really “makes a connection” with our visitors? This is where the “analysis model” of interpretation comes in.

This new model of the interpretive process, developed by David Larsen of the National Park Service, expands on Freeman Tilden’s fundamentals of interpretation and is built on three principles:

- Interpretation begins with a tangible resource: an animal, plant, place, object, person, or event, such as establishing a refuge, an Ice Age flood, or a volcanic eruption.
- These tangible resources have intangible meanings: ideas, values, emotions, natural processes, and so on.

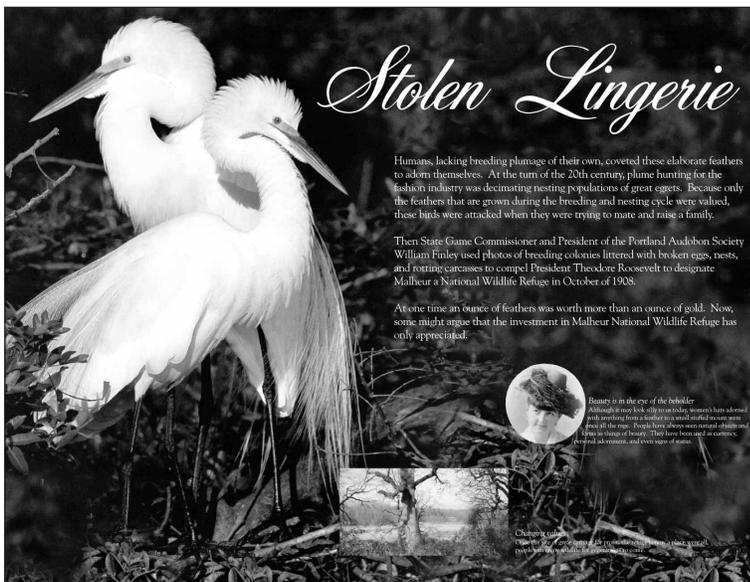
Some meanings are intellectual, while others are emotional. Certain intangible meanings, called “universal concepts,” are the most powerful because they relate to almost everyone: family, home, love, death, struggle, generosity, greed, etc. A single resource can have many intangible meanings; no single meaning is “correct.”

- The interpreter must create opportunities for visitors to connect these intangible meanings with the tangible resource. This process creates a “bond” between the visitor and the resource. *Tangible-intangible links are the foundation of all interpretation.*

How do we create these “opportunities to connect?” Region 1 Visual Information Specialist Matt Hasti attended the NCTC course “Interpretive Panels and Wayside Exhibits” and got a first-hand opportunity to try out the model in class. He was working on exhibits for Malheur NWR; for his “tangible resource” he picked an event, the establishment of Malheur NWR in 1908.

Next, he brainstormed the event’s “intangibles,” “a process that required research. He learned that the refuge was established primarily as a result of the slaughter of herons and egrets for their plumes, which were used in the fashion industry. This suggested intellectual intangibles, such as conservation, the Industrial Revolution (which created excess time and income that fueled the trade in luxury items), value, and fashion. Emotional intangibles, such as beauty, gluttony, and waste were also suggested. The three universal concepts that emerged were beauty, value, and gluttony. A theme that linked the tangible resource to at least one intangible meaning also emerged: Malheur NWR was established because people saw value in conserving wildlife, instead of perpetuating an industry that could change on a whim.

To develop the text, the “3 — 30 — 3” rule used in news writing was invoked.



Art by: Matt Hasti

See **CREATING...** Page 15

Creating...

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Three seconds to draw the visitor's attention — accomplished with Matt's catchy title, "Stolen Lingerie," and a stunning photo that reinforced the universal concept of beauty. Thirty seconds to hold the reader's interest — the heart wrenching story of how birds were killed for the plume trade just as they were mating and raising a family. Three minutes to finish reading the panel — interesting details and historic photos about turn-of-the-century fashion and nesting colonies at the refuge today.

Everyone liked Matt's panel; a few were uncomfortable with the unconventional title but most saw it as an attention grabber. An added bonus were students from Croatia attending the course, which helped attendees identify which concepts were truly "universal." The folks at Malheur loved the panel and plan to produce it as part of an upcoming series of wayside exhibits.

Matt said of the Analysis Model, "I knew I needed to do a panel about why the refuge was established, but I was having trouble figuring out what to say. The topic wasn't

real exciting to me. This model offered a great way for me to gather information and think about these concepts. I had no trouble writing the panel after going through this process."

Many folks are already using the "analysis model" instinctively, but the course codifies it and makes it easier to teach to others.

He notes that this course is not intended to make someone a designer, but it will help students reveal those "opportunities to connect," which combined with good design, makes for high quality interpretive exhibits. But even the best design in the world won't make an exhibit compelling if the content isn't!

Although the NCTC course focused on two-dimensional wayside exhibits, *all* interpretation — a fireside talk, a play, a story, a song, a brochure, a mural, a wayside panel, or a diorama — is built on the same model. Universal concepts are what get people hooked, and bring meaning to our traditional "wildlife" messages. **O**

Ken Morris is a visual information specialist for the Division of Visitor Services and Communications (formerly EPIC).



TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS

Volunteer Recruitment and Management

Learn to develop and maintain strong volunteer and group service programs. Explore the benefits and challenges of working with volunteers. Examples of resident and non-resident volunteer programs throughout the FWS will be discussed.

When: August 13-16, apply by June 14

Where: Region 1

Contact: Sharon Howard at 304/876-7494

Introduction to Visitor Services

Provides the history, legislation, regulations, and policies related to visitor services. Topics covered include: visitor services requirements, compatibility determination, planning/design principles, outreach efforts, funding issues, and evaluation techniques to help participants develop visitor service plans and programs at various levels.

When: August 18-23, apply by June 24

Where: Shepherdstown, WV

Contact: Sharon Howard at 304/876-7494

Grant Writing for Conservation

Learn out about pre-project planning, alternative funding sources, and the essential elements of a grant proposal. Bring a grant project to work on or share one with a classmate. See how to develop and critique a grant proposal during the class.

When: September 16-18, apply by July 22

Where: Shepherdstown, WV

Contact: Ora Dixon at 304/876-7314

Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities

Gateway communities border America's public lands. This introductory course helps prepare land managers and community leaders to develop and promote their own community initiatives. The course looks at issues facing gateway communities and public lands, and explores the tools that can be used to address those issues.

When: September 24-27, apply by July 26

Where: Seattle, WA

Contact: Sharon Howard at 304/876-7494

Hunt Program...

Continued from Page 1

IDENTIFY INDICATORS

Each of the elements you select will need an "indicator." An indicator is a method of measuring each element.

In other words, if you think safety is important, you might look at the number of hunter safety incidents per year or ask hunters leaving check stations if they felt safe.

If providing reasonable hunting opportunities is an important element, you might ask departing hunters how many birds each observed or had the opportunity to shoot, or you could use staff to make population estimates.

ESTABLISH STANDARDS

Next you need to establish standards. Continuing with the same indicators, if you consider the number of safety incidents per

year, you might decide that "none" is the standard. If you're looking at opportunity and number of birds observed, you might determine that a specific number of birds was a reasonable standard.

MONITOR CONDITIONS

You know what's important, you have a way of measuring, and you have a standard to measure against. Now you need to monitor. According to Schomaker, after you compare the results of your monitoring with the standard you established, you'll be able to do more than talk about what a great day some hunters had. You'll be able to talk about the quality of the hunting program.

At Mid-Columbia River NWRC we have a lot of hunters pushing for expanded opportunities. But we're very concerned about safety (we've had a few instances of "peppering," when hunters weren't paying attention to the direction of their shots) and the effects of overcrowding on the quality of the hunting experience. Schomaker's approach gives us a structure for handling these issues, as well as an objective way of explaining our decisions to hunters.

We've also relied on casual conversations with hunters to gauge our hunting program. Last year, at one of our check stations, we tried out a written questionnaire with a range of responses hunters could simply circle. We learned a lot about hunter likes and dislikes, but we really couldn't use the information to evaluate the overall hunting program. Using Schomaker's approach, it should be fairly simple to develop indicators and standards for the elements that make up a quality hunt.

Hunting is a large part of refuge use. Hunters have been the backbone of refuge conservation efforts for decades. In return for their enduring support, we have a strong obligation to know that we are providing a quality hunting program and one that also complements the primary refuge mission of placing wildlife first. **O**

John Gahr is an outdoor recreation planner at Mid-Columbia River NWR Complex. See the Spring 2002 issue of NCTC Journal for a more complete summary of John Schomaker's session.



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Photos by: USFWS

Establish standards and evaluate your hunting program to be sure it's hitting the mark.