



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Southeast Region

SOUTHEASTERN CURRENTS

APRIL 2007 NEWSLETTER

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Brad Young (center), and other MDWFP biologists, change the satellite GPS radio collar on the sedated sow bear. FWS Photo.

First bear cubs born in Mississippi delta in 40 years

Two healthy female Louisiana black bear cubs were born in February on private land in the south Mississippi delta – the first documented case of reproduction in the area in more than 40 years. The cubs' fit 220-pound mama chose to give birth in a 10-year old Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) site. Her den selection strongly supports the value of WRP and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands as quality habitat for this federally listed species. WRP and CRP are both reforestation programs of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"We knew that reforested land would grow to make valuable wildlife corridors, but discovering this productive den site in an early-successional WRP tract goes to show that bears are not just passing through this habitat, they're setting up house," said Shauna Ginger, bear biologist for the Jackson, Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office. She added, "This potential breeding population of Louisiana black bears in Mississippi moves us one step closer to recovery and delisting for this species."

Ginger assisted Brad Young, Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks' (MDWFP) bear biologist, during the capture and release effort of the new bear family. Ginger, Young, and other MDWFP biologists, recorded the bears' vital statistics and measurements plus took DNA samples. Young has been keeping track of the sow via satellite GPS radio collar for about 17 months.

Submitted by Connie Dickard, Jackson, Mississippi Ecological Services Field Office



Standing in the WRP tract where the bears were born, Mississippi First Lady Marsha Barbour (left), friend of the landowner, and FWS biologist Shauna Ginger present the 3.5-pound cubs for their photo debut. Photo by James Cummins.



Volunteers enjoy their reward for a hard day's work on the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta. The event was sponsored by the Mobile County Wildlife and Conservation

Volunteers prepare wood duck boxes for nesting season

February may not seem ideal for a day on the river, but the timing is fine if your trip is intended to prepare wood duck nest boxes for their springtime visitors. Randy Roach, Partners biologist in the Daphne, Alabama Ecological Services field office, coordinated the annual Wood Duck Box Day, working with volunteers from the Mobile County Wildlife and Conservation Association (MCWCA). Biologist Andy Ford from the Daphne Field Office also participated.

This was the 16th year of the project that is a partnership effort between MCWCA,



This screech owl proves that wood duck nest boxes make fine homes

which purchases the wood and the poles, Daphne High School, where students build the boxes, and Robertsdale, Alabama, Vocational School, where students fabricate the predator guards. The Daphne Field Office coordinates and provides technical support for the project that has approximately 650 wood duck boxes in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta.

During the day, participants locate, inspect, and prepare wood duck boxes located on public lands in the Delta. With warm, sunny weather, this year's event attracted the largest turnout ever, with more than 30 volunteers, ranging in age from seven to 78. Volunteers clean out old nesting material and replace it with fresh wood shavings. Boxes that have been damaged are repaired or replaced as necessary.

Submitted by Mike Groutt, Daphne, Alabama Ecological Services Field Office

Behind the Scenes--



Henry uncovers the aerator lid.
Photo by Andrea Dunstan.

Who says managers don't get their hands dirty?

Henry Sansing, manager of Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge claims he won't ask anyone to do something he isn't willing to do himself. When the alarm on the septic tank aerators went off one morning Henry dug through the fire ants to uncover the aerator lid and took it upon himself to untangle the blockage and get it running again. Bravo Henry!

Submitted by Andrea Dunstan, Noxubee National Wildlife Refuge, Brooksville, Mississippi



Henry cleans the aerator. Photo
by Andrea Dunstan.



View of tornado's destruction.
Photograph courtesy of Dewitt Era
Enterprise Newspaper

White River National Wildlife Refuge employees help victims of Arkansas tornado

White River National Wildlife Refuge Law Enforcement Officers Richard Gray and Brad Rabalais were deputized by the Arkansas County Sheriff's Office to offer assistance to the residents of Dumas, Arkansas after a tornado devastated the community on February 24. Richard and Brad had been listening to the area updates as tornados formed across southeastern Arkansas and were asked to respond for search and rescue efforts in Dumas and neighboring Fish and Wildlife Service lands. Dumas was only about a 60-mile drive from St Charles with the devastation being greater as every mile passed.

I was looking debris along the road when I noticed several white objects in the field, said Brad Rabalais. As I strained to see what the objects were, I realized I was looking at dozens of snow geese that had been caught in the path of the storm and thrown to the ground where they now lay."

"We thought this was something until we entered the path of the tornado. Laying in the middle of the highway was a mobile home that had been plucked up from some other location and deposited here in the middle of the highway," said Richard Gray. "A front end loader pushed the home out of the way, and we continued into Dumas dodging power lines and other debris."

Brad and Richard reported to the command center at a nearby church where they were deputized as state police and given orders by the Arkansas State Police Department. Their orders were to patrol the city and enforce an immediate city curfew. As they patrolled they asked people to return to their homes for the curfew. Several people responded that they had no home to return to. They told Brad and Richard that they lost everything and had nowhere to go. For those that had no homes, Brad and Richard escorted them to a shelter in a local church.

They encountered other victims that had equally tragic and horrific tales of the storm. Employees at McDonald's told stories of people crawling through the drive up window to escape the storm. Two small children were airlifted to Little Rock Hospital and 40 patients were treated locally for injuries sustained that evening. Many businesses were leveled and over 80 homes were annihilated.

Brad and Richard spent the rest of the evening enforcing the city curfew, consoling storm victims, and providing people with information about available aid and locations of additional shelters. They helped to restore order in the city until command units could be established and recovery efforts begun. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was proud to be able to lend a hand to a local community during such a traumatic time.

Submitted by Matt Conner, White River National Wildlife Refuge, St. Charles, Arkansas

Natasha Y. Howie named Business Woman of Year

It's only April, but 2007 is already turning out to be a really good year for Budget & Administration's Natasha Y. Howie. First, she was notified of her selection as Woman of the Year for the Snapfinger Woods Chapter of the American Business Women's Association (the frosting!). Then she learned of her promotion to Supervisory Contract Specialist for Services, Supplies, and Agreements in the Division of Contracting (the cake!)

Natasha is quick to praise and recommend ABWA to any woman interested in professional development. "ABWA helped me to overcome my natural shyness and to get active and involved in helping myself and other women in their professional growth," she says. "Without a doubt, it helped position me for my recent promotion."

Founded in 1949 as a support organization for working women, ABWA now has 1,500 chapters and 80,000 members nationwide. Meetings focus on leadership, education, networking, and national recognition of members.

Natasha throws herself wholeheartedly into the work of the Snapfinger Woods Chapter, one of 32 chapters in metro-Atlanta. She serves on the chapter's executive board and as treasurer and has held numerous other positions during her nine years of participation. It hasn't gone unnoticed. "It is particularly meaningful that I was selected for this honor by my peers," she says. Natasha will be recognized at the ABWA's national conference to be held in Greensboro, NC in September and regional spring conference to be held in Sarasota, FL in May.

Natasha is a graduate of Spelman College and holds a master's degree in logistics management from Georgia College & State University. Besides her involvement in ABWA, Natasha is active in the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, which conducts outreach, tutoring, mentoring, and health fairs in the community; and in the ministry of Ben Hill United Methodist Church, where she serves as co-captain of the usher team.

Submitted by Vicki McCoy, Special Assistant for Planning and Communications, Atlanta, Georgia



Natasha Y. Howie
Photo credit: Tom MacKenzie

Bragging Rights --



Rudy Stine presents Ralph Costa with the Army's Installation Management Command (IMCOM) Southeast Region Director's Coin at the Annual Army/FWS RCW meeting in Atlanta. Fort Bragg also presented their coin to Ralph. Photo by James Cobb, U.S. Army, Installation Management Command, Southeast Region, Atlanta, Georgia

Red-cockaded woodpecker populations increasing on eight Army installations

Army installations from around the Southeast proudly presented their red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW) statistics at the annual meeting on February 22, between the Army and the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service cheered as eight out of nine installations demonstrated how their RCW populations are increasing. Fort Bragg in North Carolina has already reached their recovery goal with the help of adjacent private landowners. Fort Stewart in Georgia is not far behind. Other installations showing population increases include Fort Gordon, Fort Jackson, Fort Polk, Camp Blanding, and Fort Benning. The Marine Ocean Terminal at Sunny Point has recently begun aggressively managing for the species, so that by next year, we should expect to see increases on all Army installations with RCWs.

This year, the meeting included the state wildlife agencies, National Wildlife Refuges, and other agencies. A new Army/FWS/State Partnership discussed how it will achieve its team charter to "Recover the RCW." The Army also presented Ralph Costa with special medallions in appreciation of his work as RCW Coordinator.

Submitted by Deborah Harris, Athens, Georgia Ecological Services Field Office

Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge volunteers, staff help clean the Chattahoochee River

Volunteering to Clean the Chattahoochee River is no easy task, especially with the Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge bordering 4,000 acres of open water and 3,000 acres of wetlands. Alabama Power, in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard detachment stationed at Eufaula, requested the coordination of the Fish and Wildlife Service staff to provide support for the annual event. Historically, debris from upriver seems to adopt the shore lines of the Eufaula area. This monumental undertaking needs tremendous coordination between watercraft and shoreline workers to collect all sorts of both floating and submerged trash and hazards. Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge has been a proud participant for several years, and the 2007 Renew Our Rivers campaign was no different. Our dedicated group of staff and volunteers worked all week, from the 19th of February through the 24th, culminating with a recognition picnic sponsored by a host of community businesses. A dedicated refuge volunteer group accepted the challenge and spent considerable effort fighting briar patches, ankle deep water, and mud to help fill two roll-off construction dumpsters during the event. While there is still a lot of work to do, Alabama Power representatives Dugg Ingram and Michelle McAndrews, estimate this year's event will match or exceed last years weight in excess of two and one half tons of loose debris.



Volunteer Group Tom and Sally Hall and Don and Mary Seager. Photo by Troy Littrell.

"The group exceeded the expectations and made a profound effect in the public and water access areas," said Troy Littrell. "With water and environmental issues being part of the local community concerns, the Fish and Wildlife staff rolled up its sleeves and demonstrated the resolve of being part of the combined efforts to save our waterways and Renew our Rivers."

Submitted by Rick Silvis, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Eufaula, Alabama



Hannah Emerson displays her winning artwork in front of the Georgia Jr. Duck Stamp exhibit at the 2007 Fisharama in Atlanta. Photo by Deborah Harris.

2007 Fisharama promotes Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan

Every year, the Fish and Wildlife Service assists Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF) with the conservation and education portion of their Fisharama trade show for anglers and hunters. This year, the Athens, Georgia Ecological Services Field Office and the Atlanta Regional Office helped GWF promote Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan as the theme of the "Conservation Connection." More than 60 displays helped educate the public about the State's top conservation action priorities and conservation areas. People were drawn toward the three dimensional displays, live animals, and kid's activities as they learned how they can support protection of wildlife and conservation areas in the state. More photos in [Photo Album](#).

Submitted by Deborah Harris, Athens, Georgia Ecological Services Field Office

National Wild Turkey Federation Contributes mural to Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Visitor/Environmental Education Center

Visitors to the new Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery Visitor/Environmental Education Center now have a wonderful new display to view during their visit. On Friday, February 9, National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) Kentucky State Board Members Jim and Pat Williams traveled to Wolf Creek to deliver a mural display for the new Visitor/Environmental Center. The partnership came about after Environmental Education/Outreach Specialist Amanda Patrick attended a state board of directors meeting for NWTF. After hearing about the new facility and all that it offers, members were unanimous in donating the display. Entitled the *Shelley Mural*, the display depicts the history of early conservation efforts in the state and encompasses the start of the NWTF in Kentucky. Along with the mural, two framed portraits explain the mural's history. A listing of all those who have won the prestigious *Shelley Nickell Memorial Award* also accompanies the mural.



Pictured with the Shelley Mural. Left to Right: Amanda Patrick, Environmental Education/Outreach Specialist; James Gray, Project Leader; Jim Williams, NWTF; Pat Williams, NWTF. Photo by Jeff Conway.

Submitted by Amanda Patrick, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown, Kentucky



Butterfly garden at Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Mike McGinty.

Education Butterfly Garden planted at Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge

On Saturday, March 10, students from the Hilton Head High School Environmental Club, with help from refuge volunteers, planted a butterfly garden on Pinckney Island National Wildlife Refuge in Bluffton, South Carolina. The students and their advisor conducted research to determine the variety of plants, taking into consideration native plants, non-invasives, drought resistance, deer resistance and attractors for native butterflies. Refuge volunteers prepped the 25- by 50-foot site prior to planting, and the Hilton Head Island Audubon Society supplied the funds to purchase the plants and supplies for the garden. A master gardener from the Clemson Extension Service provided instructions on proper planting and maintenance. To continue their educational experience, the students will continue monitoring the garden to learn how the plants survive and to offer food to the butterflies they attract.

Submitted by Amy Ochoa, Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex, Savannah, Georgia

Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge expands Bird Walk schedule

Bird Walks are offered at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on Friday mornings throughout the year; however, the Refuge will expand its Bird Walk schedule in April to include Wednesday and Thursday mornings. Beginning April 1 through October, Bird Walks are held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings at 8 a.m. at the Pea Island Visitor Center. The Center is located on Hatteras Island at Mile Post 31 on North Carolina Highway 12. Walks typically last an hour and a half, depending on how many species are seen on the trip. Bird Walks are led by local members of the Cape Hatteras and North Banks Bird Clubs, who volunteer their time to share their love of birds and the Refuge. Pat and Neal Moore, long-time leaders of the Friday Bird Walks, are at the Refuge, rain or shine, every Friday throughout the year.



Pea Island Refuge's trails offer scenic overlook views of North Pond, where a variety of bird species nest and forage throughout the spring and summer months. Photo by Michael Halminski.

Bird walks offer refuge visitors a unique opportunity to view a variety of bird species up-close. "April is a wonderful time to view birds on the Refuge," explains Wildlife Interpretive Specialist Ann Marie Chapman. "We are in the middle of the shorebird migration, but we still have some waterfowl sticking around from the winter."

Submitted by Bonnie Strawser, Alligator River/Pea Island NWR, Manteo, NC



Darner Dragonfly -- First place winner -- Richard Henry of Bemidji, MN

Refuge System Photo Contest results announced Dragonfly alights on first Place

The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) has announced the winners of the 2007 Refuge Photo Contest, a digital photo contest showcasing America's national wildlife refuges and the diverse wildlife that depend on them. With these photos and in celebration of the 104th anniversary of the establishment of the first National Wildlife Refuge on March 14, 1903, NWRA is adding over 200 images to its searchable online Refuge Image Library.

More than 2,200 images from 196 refuges from 49 states and territories were submitted to this second annual Refuge Photo Contest. Images were submitted by upload through the contest website from November 2006 until January 31, 2007.

The top four prize winners are Richard Henry of Bemidji, MN (First Place); Brett Breeding of New Castle, DE (Second Place); Daniel Kaiser of Columbus, IN (Third Place); and Mark B. Bartosik of Houston, TX (Fourth Place).

Three people from the Southeast were among the 20 fifth-place winners: Theresa Baldwin, Sanibel, FL, for an osprey photo, "Ding" Darling NWR, FL; Mark Barham, Monroe, LA, for a green snake photo, Black Bayou Lake NWR, LA; and Jack Rogers of Oviedo, FL for a photo of a Roseate spoonbill, Merritt Island NWR, FL.

To view the winning images and Image Library, visit: <http://www.refugenet.org/contest/2007ContestStatus.html>.

The NWRA Refuge Image Library, a gallery of high quality images showcasing the rich and varied wildlife and habitat protected by our country's National Wildlife Refuge System, will now feature the more than 220 semi-finalist images from this year's contest in addition to the 200 semi-finalists from last year's contest. The collection is searchable by subject category and state, and provides contact information for each photographer.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, nationwide membership organization, established in 1975. The NWRA's mission is to protect enhance and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System, lands and water set aside by the American people to protect our

country's diverse wildlife heritage. Over the years we have worked to make the Refuge System stronger and better able to address the growing challenges of conserving wildlife in our country. For more information, visit <http://www.refugenet.org>.

Taken from a press release by the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Washington, DC

Cooperative efforts pay dividends for the future waterfowl habitat at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge

During the hottest part of the summer 2006, refuge staff members Richard Johnson and Marion Guilford rolled up their sleeves and wiped their brow to assist in a cooperative effort between Ducks Unlimited of the South Atlantic Office and the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Georgia. The monumental endeavor required the construction of a 4,090-foot levee within the waterfowl impoundment area of the Bradley Unit, Georgia side of the refuge. The wall was needed to subdivide the northern area from the southern area in order to better control water resources and waterfowl habitat management. High volume inlet/outlet water pumps allow for water depth control prior to and after the annual migration of both game and non-game species.



Refuge Manager Troy Littrell presents award to Richard Johnson during staff appreciation meeting. Photo by Rick Silvis.

To help meet the needs of sandhill cranes, eastern whooping cranes, and a wide variety of waterfowl, this 850-acre impoundment area needed the water control structure in order to develop grain crops, moist soil habitat for a variety of local wildlife, and a stop-over for seasonal bird migrations. Over 300,000 cubic yards of soil was redistributed within the impoundment which gave much needed attention to leveling and controlling suitable water levels. This project provided over 50 acres of manageable habitat that has previously been a problem area for food plot restoration.

The levee construction was finished in time for the fall waterfowl season, and the installation of this water control structure added greatly to the annual nesting, feeding and migration sites. Over 391 registered visitors utilized the Bradley unit during the waterfowl season and these numbers were a vital part of the total 500,888 total visitors to the entire refuge in 2006. Continued planning and restoration of this premier habitat will ensure a dramatic, positive impact on habitat, conservation interests, and sportsman involvement. The area should become a bird watcher's paradise. The refuge staff wishes to thank Richard and Marion for a job well done.

Submitted by Rick Silvis, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Eufaula, Alabama

Hats Off --



Service Director Dale Hall presents National Ecological Services Project Leader of the Year award to Gail Carmody, project leader, Panama City Ecological Services Field Office. Pictured Left to Right:

Gail Carmody: National Ecological Services Project Leader of the Year

Gail Carmody, field supervisor of the Panama City, Florida Field Office, is the National Ecological Services Project Leader of the Year. She receives this honor for her outstanding leadership of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fisheries Resources and Ecological Services Programs in Panama City. The Panama City Field Office has fully integrated these two programs and is truly ahead of its time. The field office serves as an example for ongoing evaluations of this type of coordination, organization, and integration at the national level. Gail is an expert in developing working relationships with the Service's partners at the city, county, state, and federal levels in the Florida Panhandle. Among her many accomplishments at partnerships, Gail has served on the Gulf Sturgeon Production Working Group, the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Council-Anadromous and Habitat Committee, and as a coordinator for Gulf Striped Bass Restoration Program.

She also has facilitated numerous local and regional conservation partnerships, including the Northwest Florida Greenway, has developed a regional permit for the conservation of wetlands in Bay County, and has established Service positions and large scale aquatic conservation at Eglin Air Force Base, as well as numerous coastal projects along Pensacola, Apalachicola, Choctawhatchee and St. Andrews Bays in the Florida Panhandle. Gail has been instrumental in promoting and securing funding for the identification, protection, and restoration of aquatic habitat for the Gulf sturgeon, Gulf striped bass, and Okaloosa darter. She continues to address, track, and secure funding for priority tasks identified in the Gulf Sturgeon Recovery/Management Plan. Gail has also taken the initiative to address the issues concerning native freshwater mussel recovery and restoration in the Panama City Field Office work area. The Panama City Field Office has also established an outstanding Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program working with landowners, the National Resources Conservation Service, and the conservation community.

Gail has also demonstrated remarkable vision and leadership for the Service through work with interstate water issues in the Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa (ACT) and Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) river basins. She secured a major role for the Service in the \$13-million ACT-ACF Comprehensive Study sponsored by the Corps and the States of Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. She was the principal advocate for a strong Service voice in the subsequent deliberations under the ACT and ACF Interstate Compacts. During the past year Gail has spent an inordinate amount of time dealing with the litigation on the ACF basin with the three States and the Corps of Engineers.

For these and her other numerous, outstanding accomplishments, Gail Carmody is the National Ecological Services Project Leader of the Year.

Submitted by Dave Flemming, Ecological Services, Atlanta, Georgia

Refuge Naturalist at North Louisiana Refuge Complex receives Governor's Award for conservation achievements

Gay Gannaway Brantley, a public use specialist and naturalist for the North Louisiana Refuge Complex, was honored Saturday, March 3, 2007 with the Governor's Award for her conservation achievements. The award, a handsome statuette of a bald eagle, was presented at the 43rd Conservation Achievement Recognition Banquet held in Gonzales, Louisiana, where the Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) convened for its 68th Annual Meeting. The award is presented annually to the person or organization deemed to have made the most outstanding contribution toward the protection and wise use of the state's natural resources – air, soil and minerals, forests, waters, fish and wildlife during the previous year from among nominations submitted by the public.

Brantley has spent an entire career sharing the wonders of the natural world and the stories they tell with the public. Brantley is the responsible for all Fish and Wildlife Service environmental education and interpretation activities in the northern half of the state. Even with these challenging work responsibilities, Gay volunteers her time as conservation educator with the Girl Scouts and other groups. She also spends many evenings and weekends at the refuge and other venues, sharing her programs about wildlife and conservation. For example, Gay has been a crucial component in the success of Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge and its award-winning support group, Friends of Black Bayou. Because of her tireless efforts, the refuge now has an association with the Monroe City School System technology team, coordinating a website, educating teachers of all subjects, connecting curricula and extending field trips to before and after experiences for students, and even sharing these activities with school systems as far away as Georgia.

The North Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex encompasses Black Bayou Lake, D'Arbonne, Upper Ouachita, Handy Brake, and Red River National Wildlife Refuges.

Submitted by Sharon Fuller, North Louisiana Refuge Complex, Farmerville, Louisiana



(L to R): Terry Melancon, president of the Louisiana Wildlife Federation; Gay Brantley, public use specialist and naturalist for the North Louisiana Refuge Complex; and Dr. Earl Mathews, Region 8 Director of the National Wildlife Federation. Photo by Louisiana Wildlife Federation.



SeaGrant Extension Agent Brian Cameron presents Melody Ray-Culp with a Shining Star award. Photo by SeaGrant.

Service recognized for Living Shoreline Initiative

The Coastal Program in the Florida Panhandle was recently recognized for stimulating the Living Shoreline Initiative in Northwest Florida. The initiative is to educate property owners that establishing living shorelines – salt marsh, seagrass, oyster reef, tidal flat, and dune habitats – should be the primary means for shoreline protection and not amoring. The University of Florida SeaGrant Extension Service presented Melody Ray-Culp, ecologist at the Panama City, Florida Ecological Services Field Office, with a Shining Star award in February 2007 for her efforts to initiate the Living Shoreline program locally.

Submitted by Gail Carmody, Panama City, Florida Ecological Services Field Office

Richard Johnson's dedication and skills pay off at Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge

Equipment Engineer Richard Johnson recently received an appreciation award from Refuge Manager Troy Littrell. Richard built some desperately needed additions to the Kennedy Impoundment game check station. Recognizing the need for construction of a handicapped ramp and deck structure attachment, his keen eye and skills for carpentry work added immeasurably to the public access capabilities needed for handicapped sportsmen. His skills were tested in planning, materials acquisition, construction, and producing a final product that made the refuge proud and drew accolades from the hunters and community visitors. Mr. Richard Johnson is a person of multi-task capabilities and talents. He previously volunteered to assist hurricane Katrina victims and spent seven days in the ravaged region.



Richard Johnson and Marion Guilford work on the levee road. Photo by Troy Littrell.

Submitted by Rick Silvis, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Eufaula, Alabama



Marion Guilford receiving his 20-year recognition award and dedicated service recognition. Photo by Rick Silvis.

Elbow grease and dedication accomplishes special project involving Ducks Unlimited and Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge

Elbow grease and dedication accomplished a cooperative special needs project between the Eufaula Refuge equipment operator Marion Guilford and Ducks Unlimited. During the exhausting heat of the Summer 2006, Marion completed an extensive construction project. He helped construct a 3,000-foot levee road located at the Bradley waterfowl habitat impoundment area, in the Georgia side of the refuge. He also placed the water control structure for the levee construction. Rising to the occasion, Marion struggled to relocate in excess of 300,000 cubic yards of soil to build, shape and divide separate parcels with in the waterfowl habitat area. Utilizing grading equipment, state of the art surveying electronics, and fighting black muddy soil, he succeeded prior to the opening of the Fall waterfowl season. A cooperative project between Ducks Unlimited and the Fish and Wildlife Service enabled a desperately needed water control structure to increase waterfowl habitat management ability.

"The amazing thing is that Marion Guilford accomplished this complex project besides his other designated duties and projects," stated Refuge Manager Troy Littrell. "Marion just completed his 20-year appreciation milestone and like a Timex watch he keeps on ticking."

Submitted By Rick Silvis, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge, Eufaula, Alabama

Photo Album --

2007 Fisharama promotes Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan -- more photos



Service biologist Garry Tucker talked about the importance of the Georgia National Wildlife Refuges at the 2007 Fisharama in Atlanta. Photo by Deborah Harris.



Brianna Freeman colors wetland animals at the Fish and Wildlife Service booth at the 2007 Fisharama in Atlanta. Photo by Deborah Harris.

Visitor Services --

Temporary A.R.M. Loxahatchee Visitor Center prepared for business



Temporary Visitor Center. Photo by Chuck Ryan.

Hurricane Wilma further damaged an already fragile Visitor Center in 2005. Now, A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge takes a giant step toward replacing the Visitor Center by leasing a trailer as a temporary replacement. The original \$80,000 proposal to deliver, set up, and lease the trailer was too expensive. Deputy Project Manager Rolf Olson determined that the refuge maintenance staff had the skills and were capable of doing the installation independently.

Steve Matzkow, maintenance supervisor, and Allen Hansen, maintenance worker, tackled the project. After the trailer provider delivered, leveled and strapped down the trailer, the Loxahatchee Maintenance staff took over. Steve and Allen relocated existing sewage, water, and utility connections and terminated utility services that were attached to the soon to be demolished Administration building. (The old administration building is part of the post hurricane construction effort with the Visitor Center). Allen installed new electrical, fiber optics, phone lines, and water and sewer connections with Steve's assistance. Allen also installed a new lift station and a centralized utility panel area.



After installing the utilities in the central area, all the connections were run to the trailer and hooked up. Then a wooden handicap access ramp was built, and sod was laid. The work took three weeks of Steve and Allen's time but saved at least \$50,000.



Allen Hansen works on an electrical panel. Photo by Chuck Ryan.

Wage Grade Profile --

Eric Craddock: Getting the job done with a smile!



Eric surveys the needs at Upper Milltail Launch Site on Alligator River NWR. Photo by Bruce Creef.

"You name it, we've done it." Eric Craddock sums up his work at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge with his straightforward motto. A man of few words, Eric is an equipment operator with an impressive set of skills who is always ready to get the job done.

He got his start running equipment for a logging company when he was 18 years old - hauling Atlantic white cedar out of what is today Alligator River. In 1993, Eric joined the fire crew at Alligator River, and he has been movin' and shakin' ever since! He's moved equipment from North Carolina all over the east coast, including a harrowing trip to Arkansas, when he and a co-worker got a lowboy up and over a mountain on a narrow road with steep sides. Thankfully, he lived to tell the tale! Eric also had the more pleasant opportunity to go down to Pelican Island in 2003 to prepare the Refuge for the Centennial celebrations.

When asked about his favorite thing on the job, Eric doesn't hesitate to give his answer: "People. Maintenance is not a one-person job. Even when you change a light bulb, you need someone to hold the ladder!" One of his fondest memories was a Friday afternoon when he and Bobby Govan were putting in fire line. Each time they brought equipment to the work site, something ended up going wrong - once the equipment went into a ditch, once the equipment broke down -- and they ended up having to walk back to the shop three times. "We were so angry and frustrated...we just had to laugh at each other," he says

Eric's favorite hobby is fishing, and frequently the Alligator River crew comes into work to find fried rockfish fillets from his more successful ventures. He has lived in the Manns Harbor community for 47 years, and raised a son who is a brick mason and a daughter who is studying to be a nurse. He also spoils a six year old grandchild at home.

"I never thought I'd end up close to home working in the same place where I started out," Eric says wistfully with a smile.

He may be pleased with his job at Alligator River, but he's definitely not the only one. Based on the camaraderie between him and his Refuge co-workers, there are quite a few people that are glad he ended up where he did!



Eric has a finesse on heavy equipment surpassed by none. And, his "can do" attitude is irreplaceable. Photo by Ann Marie Chapman.

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