



The Mountain-Prairie Review

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May-June 2003

Colorado Field Office Recognized for Environmental Stewardship Excellence

By Deserai Anderson-Utley, EA

Lakewood- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Lakewood ES field office has been honored for their dedication to and participation in a project that simultaneously protects the shortgrass prairie in Colorado and helps plan for transportation needs in the state. The field office is the recipient of the Service’s first annual Transportation Environmental Stewardship Excellence Award.

The project, implemented by the Service and the Colorado Department of Transportation, works to protect the critical shortgrass prairie ecosystem through easements and conservation agreements with private landowners. The shortgrass prairie provides habitat for many threatened and endangered species in Colorado’s eastern plains. This project has helped to protect 36 species and 6 habitat types. This initiative is expected to protect as much as 50,000 acres of shortgrass prairie. Species that benefit as a result of the project include the mountain plover, black-tailed prairie dog, burrowing owl, and swift fox.

Lee Carlson, Lakewood office Field Supervisor, attended an awards ceremony on Earth Day, April 22nd, in Washington, D.C. and was presented with the award by Deputy Director Marshall Jones. Deputy Director Jones said, “Lee Carlson and his staff have made extraordinary pro-active contributions to protect an endangered ecosystem, while providing for critical transportation needs of the State of Colorado.”

In addition to the Service award, Carlson was presented with the 2003 Environmental Excellence Award in the Ecosystems Habitat and Wildlife category from the Federal Highway Administration. The Lakewood field office worked in partnership with 10 other Federal, State, local and non-profit agencies to implement the Shortgrass Prairie Initiative.



(L to R): Marshall Jones, Lee Carlson and Paul Hoffman

Congratulations to Lee Carlson from Region 6!



Happy Summer Day!



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2nd Annual Cultural Diversity Celebration

By Carrie Cordova, WTR

The Regional Office celebrated their 2nd Annual Cultural Diversity on May 15, 2003. Many employees wore ethnic clothes, prepared their favorite ethnic food, shared items from travels abroad, and most importantly, brought themselves to participate in a fun-filled day of activities and learning.

We also celebrated our Special Emphasis Programs. Last year's event was so successful the Regional Office decided to offer it again. In previous years, the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights has been responsible for organizing events to commemorate and celebrate Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) recognized by Federal Executive Orders and departmental policies. The programs recognized include: Martin Luther King's birthday, National African American History Month, National Women's History Month, Women's Equality Day, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, Older Americans Month, Gay and Lesbian Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and Native American/Alaska Native Heritage Month.

Earlier this year, the Office of Diversity and Civil Rights requested volunteers for the SEP committee. Members included Jolene Cervantes, Nancy Braun, Michele Seitz, Carrie Cordova, Christy Bates, Gerri Purvis, Mary Knuth, David Redhorse, Rick Estrada, Linda Stevens, and Jeff Roets. This committee had the responsibility of recruiting speakers and entertainment for the program.

Ms. Denise Lopez, a senior from Westminster High School, kicked off the event by singing a beautiful rendition of the National Anthem while the Hickley JROTC presented the Colors. Next, we heard from Mr. Albert Smith, a Navajo Code Talker and World War II veteran. Then, Parents and Friends of Gay and Lesbian (PFLAG) shared personal experiences and obstacles affecting our gay and lesbian communities.

This year employees of the Regional Office shared their ethnic dishes at a potluck luncheon, while enjoying the uplifting music from the Harmony Gospel Group (featuring our own Gerri Purvis) that had us clapping our hands and tapping our feet. We also had booths with information and items collected from our employees representing the fabric of our nation. The booths were located in the third floor conference room where they were viewed throughout the entire day.

After lunch, we listened to a presentation from Special Olympics Colorado, and learned that this organization is not only an athletic organization but it also serves as a main social outlet for many disabled Americans. Next, Jeopardy's Alex Trebec (Jeff Roets) and Wheel of Fortune's Vanna White (Carrie Cordova) stopped by for a fast-paced game of Diversity Jeopardy where Lorene Trujillo went out on top (literally considering she's retiring this next month). The last event of the day was the Rocky Mountain Polynesian Dance Group who entertained us with various dances from Hawaii, Tahiti and Polynesia.

The Special Emphasis Program Planning Committee would like to extend thanks and appreciation to all employees who attended and participated in this event. We look forward to seeing you again next year. Also, remember we are always seeking ideas, suggestions, and volunteers so please consider next year. Once again, thank you for supporting the program.

FWS Employee to Receive White House Award for Work in "Greening" the Government



By Deserai Anderson-Utley, EA

Jim Behrmann is being recognized for the third time for this initiative and his creative work to bring "greener" practices to the Fish and Wildlife Service. Behrmann received the White House Closing the Circle Award for his commitment to environmental stewardship on June 10, 2003, at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Nominated for his inventive uses of environmental management and procurement, Behrmann has lead efforts in the regional office and at field stations to use recycled materials in building, maintenance, and purchasing decisions. He has used his position as Environmental Compliance Coordinator to promote the use of environmentally friendly products and increase recycling of materials. The award, which honors Federal employees who demonstrate leadership in helping implement recycling, pollution prevention, green procurement, and other environmentally responsible programs was designed to foster support for green programs nationwide.

Behrmann also received the Service's Environmental Leadership Award and the Department of the Interior Environmental Achievement Award in 2002 for his green procurement practices. The White House Closing the Circle Award winners were chosen from over 200 nominations from across the Federal Government.



Media Corner

News Media: Bridging the Interview

By Debbie Felker, Colorado River Info and Education Coordinator

Sometimes when you are interviewed, you may be asked a question that is unrelated to the topic being discussed or that steers you away from the message YOU want delivered. You can redirect the interview by “bridging” the question. Bridging means answering or acknowledging the interviewer’s question and then delivering your own positive message. Think of it in terms of your answer to their question plus the message you want to give (A+1).

Here are examples of ways to “bridge” your response:

- Your answer...and in addition I’d like to say...
- Your answer...but the point I really want to make is...
- No. Let me explain why.
- Let me add something to that...
- Another point I’d like to make is....

If a question is loaded or contains inaccurate information, challenge it firmly and politely before you answer. You might say:

- You have to look at it from a different perspective.
- That’s not how I’d put it. What I would say is...
- That’s not how we see it at the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- That’s not really the issue, the issue is...

Colin Powell once said, “Remember that the reporter is in charge of the question, but *you* are in charge of the answer.”

Next Month: Off-the-Record.



External Affairs is pleased to announce that Sharon Rose, a 26-year veteran of the Service and long-time cornerstone of the R6 EA shop, has been selected as the new Assistant Regional Director for EA. Sharon is no stranger to the ARD

role, having served as Acting ARD several times in the past, most recently since January of this year, when Dan Sobieck returned to Region 3. Sharon’s institutional knowledge of, and dedication to the Service and its programs will be a great asset for the Region, the bureau, and fish and wildlife resources as we work to meet future challenges. Please join us to welcome Sharon to her new “official” position!

NWR Employee Receives Highest National Award

By Deserai Anderson-Utley, EA
With help from Jim Griffin
(National Elk Refuge)

Ann Blakely at the National Elk Refuge is someone that other administrative officers call for help or advice. She has been recognized as the Jackson Hole Business and Professional Women’s Club, “Woman of the Year”, and as Refuge Manager, Barry Reiswig says, “Ann has made many outstanding achievements in every aspect of her work at the refuge.” This praise and dedication earned Ann Blakely the National Wildlife Refuge Employee of the Year Award for 2003.

Ann is the first administrative officer to receive this prestigious award. She is known throughout the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Mountain-Prairie Region as someone who can be counted on to mentor and train other administrative employees. When told of her selection, Blakely said, “I am especially honored and humbled by this selection, as I enjoy working in an environment where my skills and contributions are recognized as vital to the agency’s mission.”

Blakely was chosen to receive this award from 5,000 employees at over 450 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The award ceremony was held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on March 26, 2003. Ann’s 23 year Federal service career includes seven years with the National Park Service, seven years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and nine years in her current position with the Fish and Wildlife Service at the National Elk Refuge in Jackson, Wyoming.

The Refuge Employee of the Year Award is given to an employee who demonstrates a commitment to conservation of our natural resources, superior management and/or technical skills, innovation, effectiveness in dealing with outside organizations and the public, and whose work advances the cause of wildlife conservation.

Bigtime Bust for Baiting Waterfowl

By Karen Miranda Gleason, EA

For the Yocams of Orchard, Colorado, cattle ranching is a family business. So, apparently, was baiting geese on the family ranch near the eastern plains town of Greeley. Father and son team David and Matthew made quite a killing with their illegal hunting operation, netting over \$45,000 last year alone by leasing out blinds and charging for access to baited areas, providing very successful hunting trips for their clients.



“They used a front end loader to dump grain corn in short grass pastures, immediately bringing in four to five thousand geese at a time,” said Roger Gephart, Resident Agent in Charge and lead agent on the case. “The birds were habituated to the area.”

The colorful duo often reserved the better shooting spots for themselves, and their attorney and professional wrestler friends. Baiting birds wasn't their only illegal pastime. Along with breaking game regs, the senior Yocam was alleged to have been involved in violent activity for the last 15 to 20 years, including a felony conviction for illegal possession of a machine gun. His 25 year-old son is also a convicted felon. Numerous threats to individuals and conservation officers, a stash of guns, and shoot-outs in connection with a family feud motivated neighbors into keeping quiet about their actions.

After being tipped off to the activity by the Colorado Division of Wildlife, law enforcement agents visited the ranch, knocked on the door, and talked with the Yocams about waterfowl regulations. The early warnings were ignored.

Through numerous surveillances and interviews over the course of a year, as well as analysis of hundreds of documents, agents were able to document the crimes. Execution of a search warrant yielded ten illegal firearms and 6,000 rounds of ammunition, along with receipts showing the Yocams had bought, possessed, or sold other firearms and about another 6,000 rounds of ammo.

Thanks primarily to the work of Regional Law Enforcement, the family income and game harvest will now be dropping substantially, as the Yocams enjoy a respite behind bars. With prosecution under Federal law completed, David is now serving a one year and one day prison sentence, while Matthew is scheduled for 5 months in prison and another 5 months of home confinement. Together, the pair will also fork over \$40,000 in fines for selling unlawfully taken wildlife, (hunting over bait) and unlawful possession of firearms.

Region 6 Profiles Big Game Big Draw at Sullys Hill

The Sullys Hill National Game Preserve in Devils Lake, North Dakota, was created in 1921 as a big game preserve, refuge, and breeding grounds for wild animals and birds. The 1,674-acre preserve provides great opportunities for 25,000 annual visitors to see and photograph large game animals. This is one of four Service preserves established primarily to help in the recovery of the American Bison. As a Regional Conservation Learning Center, it also provides more than 100 education programs to over 5,000 students every year.



Wildlife Abounds at Lee Metcalf Refuge

No matter the time of year, your chances of spotting wildlife are pretty good at Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge. Since 1963, bald eagles, deer, and waterfowl have called this 2,797-acre area their home in the heart of the Bitterroot Valley. A staff of six tends to refuge programs and the nearly 60,000 visitors which tour the refuge annually. A self-guided tour and many hiking trails help visitors enjoy the wildlife and the scenic landscape. The refuge also coordinates the Conservation through the Arts Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program. A Kid's Fishing Clinic is offered during National Fishing Week.

Fish Technology Center Breaks Ground for New Lab

By Karen Miranda Gleason, EA

Despite biting cold, snow, rain, and wind, staff and supporters at the Bozeman Fish Technology Center (FTC) were all smiles during the much anticipated groundbreaking for the new \$6.5 million lab and administration building at the complex. The new lab will provide better tools and space for about 15 scientists and technicians tackling national aquatic resource issues. The building will house new equipment, laboratories, offices and conference rooms, a library, and a visitor's center with aquaria and historic displays.

The FTC is currently working on numerous efforts to support recovery and restoration of threatened and imperiled species, and improve the quality of recreational fish, including a partnership project studying means to improve nutrition and reduce costs of feeding hatchery fish. As part of its scientific work in fish nutrition, genetics, physiology, microbiology and other areas, the Center analyzes biological samples and exchanges information for studies to benefit pallid and shovelnose sturgeon, cutthroat trout, Arctic grayling, razorback suckers, bull trout, and rainbow trout.

Featured speaker at the groundbreaking was Bobbi Geise, Director of Montana Outdoor Science School, who described the active partnership with FTC to promote environmental education. Other speakers included Congressional staff for Montana Senators Burns and Baucus, and Representative Rehberg; FTC Center Director Bill Krise and Assistant Center Director Greg Kindschi; and Karen Miranda Gleason of External Affairs, representing the Regional Office.

Construction for the new building began immediately and is expected to be completed in a little over a year. Ribbon-cutting and dedication of the new facility is planned for August 2004.



Photo Caption: Breaking ground for construction of the new laboratory and administration building at the Service's Bozeman Fish Technology Center in Montana. (L to R) Bobbi Geise, Director, Montana Outdoor Science School; Laura Lloyd, field representative, Senator Burns; Jeff Garrand, field representative for Rep. Rehberg; Clay Pipinich, Job Foreman, Dick Anderson, Construction; Patti Bean, field representative for Senator Baucus; Bill Krise, Center Director, Bozeman Fish Technology Center.

Tip of the Month Create Your Own Custom Word Templates

by Heather Gonzalez, ITM

If you don't like Arial font, you never need to use it again, even when writing a new document in Word version 2002. You can create a template of your favorite styles and sizes and use whenever you want.

To create a custom template:

1. On the View menu, select Task Pane.
2. If the New Document task pane is not visible, select it from the drop-down menu in the upper right corner of the task pane.
3. In the New Document task pane, click General Templates.
4. In the Template dialog box that appears, select the General Tab, and click Blank Document once to select (it will be the base of your new template).
5. Under the Create New section, click Template, and then click OK.

In the new template, add any text and graphics you want to appear in all new documents that you base on the template, and delete any items you don't want to appear.

Make the changes you want to the margin settings, page size and orientation, styles, and other formats.

On the File menu, click Save, give your template a name, and then click Close on the File menu.

Your new, customized template will be available as a choice under General Templates in the New Document task pane.

RD's Column

The Changing Nature of Western Water Management

By Ralph Morgenweck, RD

On June 6, Secretary Norton convened a conference in Denver to announce "Water 2025," a new initiative aimed at preventing future water conflicts between competing interests in the West. Water 2025 will help focus public attention on those areas, such as Denver and the Front Range, where increasing demands on water resources have created the potential for "water wars" of the sort we have seen recently in the Klamath and Middle Rio Grande River Basins.

Those of us that work with fish and wildlife resources in the West know how critical water is to species and their habitats. We also know that unprecedented human population growth and development in this region, coupled with agricultural water use, has placed great strain on an already limited water supply. Everyday, we work with cities, farmers, anglers, power producers, elected officials, and other water users to try and accommodate human water needs while ensuring that fish and wildlife have water of sufficient quantity and quality to persist. Drought only makes our task more difficult.

Fortunately, there are signs, including Water 2025, that we as a society are starting to recognize the pressing need to develop a new framework for water management in the West. This new framework emphasizes conservation, acknowledges the finite nature of supply in this dry landscape, and most relevant to the Service's purview, recognizes and provides for fish and wildlife.

Because this dominant existing water management approach in this part of the world is so firmly rooted and codified, development of this new framework is apt to be slow and controversial.

Cont' from RD's Column

Our experience in trying to affect change in the management of the Missouri and Platte River Basin, for example, illustrates this. I am confident, however, that by continuing to promote and advance cooperative water management practices that work for people and for fish and wildlife, as we have done in the Upper Colorado River Basin, we will eventually arrive at a sustainable, long-term solution for Western water issues.

Congressional Affairs Legislative Affairs Update

By Matt Kales, EA

As the Independence Day Recess nears, Congress is considering several pieces of legislation of interest to the Service:

New Bills

Newly introduced bills include S. 1307 (Smith, OR), which would authorize the Secretary of Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, to assist in implementing fish passage and screening facilities at non-federal water projects in the Columbia River Basin, which includes portions of Montana, Wyoming, and Utah. The bill, which was introduced on June 20, has been referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (Domenici, NM).

Current Bill Status

On June 17, the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water (Crapo, ID), held a hearing on (S. 525 (Levin, MI), which would amend the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 to reauthorize and improve the Act. Key provisions of the bill include a requirement for ecological surveys aimed at early detection of invasive species and an authorization for \$27.5 million in "rapid response" funds. The Department supports reauthorization of the bill, but has some concerns about some of the technical amendments to the Act. Deputy Director Matt Hogan testified at the hearing and highlighted the Service's history of aggressively dealing with aquatic invasives.

Native American Affairs

Director's Remarks at Native American Fish & Wildlife Soc.

By David Redhorse, EA

At the 2003 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society national conference held in Traverse City, Michigan, Service Director Steve Williams acknowledged progress conserving and protecting wildlife through partnerships developed between tribes and the Service. While he highlighted successful program activities since the 1994 Native American Policy, he noted early relations with one tribe began in 1874, when the Service's predecessor worked with the McCloud Wintu Tribe in the Sacramento Valley to protect traditional fishing while establishing the nation's first salmon hatchery.

As he listed various achievements in terms of funding, communication, government-to-government relations, technical assistances, training, and respect for Native American religious and cultural practices, the Director referenced the 1994 Policy. He mentioned the contribution of the Native American Liaisons to improve communication with tribes and make Service expertise accessible to tribes, the role of the Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance program to provide tribes technical assistance and supplement tribal capabilities, the opportunities for fisheries management under the recently completed Fisheries Strategic Plan, habitat restoration with Partners for Fish and Wildlife, the training by the Division of Law Enforcement and preserving religious and cultural practices by providing eagle feathers and parts by the National Eagle Repository and establishing the eagle aviary at Zuni Pueblo.

With the new tribal wildlife grants, the Director envisions cooperative efforts to strengthen the Native American Policy, support conservation of fish and wildlife resources on tribal lands, and enhance the preservation of tribal religious and cultural

The Mountain-Prairie Review is a bi-monthly publication produced by the USFWS Region 6 External Affairs Office. Publisher: Ralph Morgenweck, Regional Director; Editor: Matt Kales, EA; Staff Writers: Karen Miranda Gleason, Diane Katzenberger, David Redhorse, Sharon Rose; Design and Layout: Heather Gonzalez, IRM/ Jean Clemens, EA. All contributions from Region 6 employees are welcomed and will be considered for publication.