

October 17-18, 2008

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## **Fiscal Year 2007**

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*In FY 2007, Division of Realty efforts resulted in signed options and obligations on 112 tracts.*

*This effort will protect 13,099 acres of habitat with a total value of \$17,238,262.*



**Bald Eagle at  
Patoka River NWR**

Credit: NCTC Image Library

## **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

### **Region 3**

## **Division of Realty Annual Report Fiscal Year 2007**

The Fiscal Year 2007 Report of Lands Under Control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will report that the Region 3 Division of Realty protected 9,680.68 acres of land with a value of \$11,393,826.63. These values represent a snapshot of the properties where the United States received title or the Service received administrative jurisdiction.

The purpose of this regional annual report is to provide the "big picture" - to describe the entire workload of the Region 3 Division of Realty, including lands optioned, obligated, and acquired, together with all realty-related support activities.

In general, the land acquisition process is comprised of the following steps: initiation, negotiation, option, title curative, funding, processing, and closing. There are also unique cases such as Federal-to-Federal land transfers and land donations that involve a variation of the above general steps. The land acquisition process may involve either current fiscal year cases, or multi-year cases. Current fiscal year cases start and finish in the same fiscal year. Multi-year cases start and finish in separate fiscal years.

### **Funding Sources**

The funded acquisitions described in this report utilized monies from the following sources: the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF); the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); the Natural Resource

Damage Assessment (NRDA) fund; the Emergency/Hardship account of the LWCF; the Inholding account of the LWCF; Endangered Species funding; contributed funds; and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) funds.

### **Option Summary**

#### **Multi-Year Options (2006-2007)**

The Division of Realty processed, accepted, and closed 13 options funded in FY 2006 and closed in FY 2007.

In addition, the Division processed, accepted, and closed 44 tracts which were optioned in FY 2006 and funded in FY 2007.

#### **Current Fiscal Year Options**

During FY 2007 the Division successfully negotiated 55 new signed options for the acquisition of fee and less-than-fee interests. Of these 55 new cases, 41 of them were obligated in FY 2007

#### **Multi-Year Options (2007-2008)**

Of the 55 new options negotiated in FY 2007, the Division of Realty will carry 14 of the options into FY 2008.

### **Funding Summary**

#### **Fiscal Year 2006 Carryover**

Realty staff processed and closed 13 options which were funded in FY 2006 and carried over into FY 2007.

This represents the protection of 1,404 acres of habitat at a cost of \$1,694,153.

### **Fiscal Year 2007**

The Division of Realty staff obligated FY 2007 funds on 85 tracts (44 tracts optioned in FY 2006 and 41 tracts optioned in FY 2007).

This represents the protection of 10,383 acres of habitat at a cost of \$10,101,461.

This includes the processing and acceptance of seven land donations protecting 2,927 acres of habitat, three easement donations, protecting 3.61 acres, one transfer of 198.4 acres from the Department of the Army, and one cooperative agreement at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (IWR), protecting 780 acres.

### **Fiscal Year 2008 Carryover**

Fourteen tracts were optioned in FY 2007 which will be funded in FY 2008. These tracts will eventually protect 1,509.63 acres of habitat at a cost of \$5,442,450.

In summary, the total combined efforts of the Division of Realty resulted in signed options and obligations of 112 tracts, protecting a total of 13,099 acres of habitat at a cost of \$17,238,262 to the Service.

The remainder of this report will address the level of effort for FY 2007 *obligations*.



**Agassiz NWR** Credit: NCTC Image Library

### **Waterfowl Production Areas**

Realty staff negotiated, processed, and accepted 54 transactions at 26 projects in the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program in Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In Iowa, the Service's Waterfowl Production Area land acquisition effort was assisted by the Land Management and Acquisition Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The breakdown for these acquisition efforts is given as follows:

#### **Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF)**

Allocations from the MBCF enabled the Division of Realty staff to negotiate, process, and accept 54 transactions at 26 wetland projects involving the protection of 4,792.35 acres (1,919.68 acres of fee acquisitions, 1,782.20 acres of wetland easements, and 1,090.47 acres of habitat easements). The total obligated land cost to the United States for these acquisition efforts was \$7,155,108. These land costs include \$20,292 for trust fund payments to counties and \$161,840 for administrative overpayments.

#### **Natural Resource Damage Assessment**

An allocation from the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) funds enabled the Division of Realty to fund one acquisition in the Winnebago Waterfowl Production Area to acquire a total of 83.98 acres at a cost of \$230,649.

### **National Wildlife Refuges**

In the Refuge Acquisition Program Realty Land Acquisition staff negotiated, processed, and accepted 18 transactions at 10 projects resulting in the protection of 1,597 acres of habitat (1,558 acres of fee

acquisitions, 0.34 acres of access easement, and 40 acres of habitat easement). The total obligated land cost to the United States for these acquisition efforts was \$2,715,704. A narrative breakdown for these acquisition efforts is given as follows:

#### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund enabled the Realty staff to process a total of 12 transactions at 6 projects involving the protection of 897 acres. The total land cost of these acquisition efforts was \$1,523,941.

#### **Emergency/Hardship Fund**

Emergency/Hardship funding from the LWCF enabled the Division of Realty to fund or supplement funding on a total of two transactions at two projects involving the protection of 29 acres. The total amount of emergency/hardship funds utilized was \$33,000.



**Historical: Marking the Boundary**  
Credit: NCTC Image Library

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### **Inholding Fund**

Inholding funding from the Washington Office enabled Realty staff to fund or supplement funding on a total of five transactions at three projects involving the protection of 563 acres. The total amount of inholding funds used was \$691,400.

### **Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC)**

MBCC funding of \$149,068 was utilized to supplement funding on one tract at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge (IWR), protecting 32 acres of land.

### **NAWCA/Contributed Funds**

At Patoka River NWR, a NAWCA grant to Ducks Unlimited enabled the Division of Realty to fund an important tract of land. The \$40,000 grant, along with a bequest of \$78,295, was leveraged with LWCF funding resulting in the protection of 350 acres.

At Detroit River IWR, a NAWCA grant totaling \$200,000 to Ducks Unlimited partially funded one project. These contributed funds were combined with funds from the MBCF and the LWCF to protect a total of 65.14 acres of critical habitat.

### **Miscellaneous Acquisitions**

#### **Donations**

Realty staff negotiated, processed, and accepted seven fee and three easement donations of land at seven projects which resulted in the protection of 2,933 acres.

#### **Cooperative Agreements**

A Cooperative Agreement between the United States and The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority resulted in the protection of 780 acres of habitat. The Service will be responsible for managing this land at the Detroit River IWR.

#### **Transfers**

A transfer of property by the Department of the Army at the Lost Mound Unit, Upper Mississippi National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Illinois resulted in 198.4 acres of habitat being added to the refuge at no cost to the Service.



*Charity Island Lighthouse  
Credit: Shirley Korman*

**FY 2007 Summary Table**  
**Dollars Obligated and Acres Acquired**

Source	Acres Protected	FY 2007 Obligation
<b>Waterfowl Production Areas</b>		
<i>Migratory Bird Conservation Fund</i>		
Fee Purchase (22)	1,919.68	\$5,338,851.00
Trust Fund Payments to Counties	0	\$20,292.00
Administrative Overpayments	0	\$161,840.00
Habitat Easements (14)	1,090.47	\$1,199,675.00
Wetland Easements (18)	1782.20	\$434,450.00
<i>Total MBCF</i>	<i>4,792.35</i>	<i>\$7,155,108.00</i>
<i>Natural Resource Damage Assessment</i>	<i>83.98</i>	<i>\$230,649.00</i>
<i>Fee Purchase (1) split with MBCF</i>		
<b>Subtotal for Waterfowl Production Areas</b>	<b>6,858.61</b>	<b>\$7,385,757.00</b>
<b>National Wildlife Refuges</b>		
<i>Land and Water Conservation Fund</i>	<i>897.20</i>	<i>\$1,523,941.13</i>
<i>Inholding Fund</i>	<i>562.79</i>	<i>\$691,400.00</i>
<i>Emergency/Hardship Fund</i>	<i>29.0</i>	<i>\$33,000.00</i>
<i>MBCF</i>	<i>31.92</i>	<i>\$149,068.00</i>
<i>NAWCA &amp; Contributed Funds</i>	<i>77.00</i>	<i>\$318,295.00</i>
<b>Subtotal for National Wildlife Refuges</b>	<b>1,597.91</b>	<b>\$2,615,704.13</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Acquisitions</b>		
Fee Donations (7)	2,926.79	\$0
Easement Donations (2)	3.61	\$0
Cooperative Agreements (1)	780.00	\$0
Exchanges (Acquired)	3.97	\$0
Exchanges (Divested)	-3.97	\$0
Transfers (1)	198.4	\$0
<b>Subtotal for Miscellaneous Acquisitions</b>	<b>3,907.80</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Total for FY 2007 Obligations</b>	<b>10,383.04</b>	<b>\$10,101,461.13</b>
<b>FY 2007 Options carried into FY 2008</b>		
Fee Options (9)	1,120.78	\$5,101,200.00
Habitat Easements (1)	281.51	\$341,250.00
Exchanges (Acquired)	0.39	0
Exchanges (Divestiture)	-0.39	0
Donations (2)	107.34	0
<b>Total Carryover 2008</b>	<b>1,509.63</b>	<b>\$5,442,450.00</b>

**Additional  
Realty Accomplishments  
Fiscal Year 2007**

**Minnesota Land Exchange Board**

Realty staff requested and received approval on all 44 tracts presented to the Minnesota Land Exchange Board in FY 2007.

**Migratory Bird Conservation Commission**

In 2006, approval was given by the MBCC for the use of \$149,068 from the MBCF, which was leveraged with \$156,632 from the LWCF, and \$200,000 from a NAWCA grant held by Ducks Unlimited. Using these three funding sources enabled the Service to acquire important property in FY 2007.

**Right-of-Way Permits**

Realty staff completed the processing of five right-of-way permits which provided the authority for highway, utility, and access projects across lands of the National Wildlife Refuge System and Waterfowl Production Areas. Six additional right-of-way permit cases are in progress.

**Land Record Card System**

The Division of Realty completed the review and updating of the 154 unit cards of the Land Record System. All summary, acreage summary, revenue sharing, funding and land tract record cards were reviewed and revised to incorporate all of the FY 2007 land acquisitions. A new unit, Barry County Waterfowl Production Area, located in Michigan, was added to the card record system, bringing the total number of unit cards to 155.

**Land Record System (LRS)**

Realty Management staff completed the review and updating of all FY 2007 land acquisition records in the LRS database.

**Refuge Revenue Sharing**

For FY 2007, a total of \$2,795,098 on 883,337 acres was paid to 281 units of local government for their FY 2006 payments. Region 3 continues to participate in the on-going Washington Office request of getting all new payees enrolled in Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) payments. This includes sending letters to the units of local government and coordinating with Denver Finance. This year the 281 EFT payments resulted in a 100% EFT payment rate. The process includes cross-referencing between revenue sharing cards and the USFWS Payments to Counties Report. A final update was made to the report prior to notification and payment to payees. Notice was sent to Refuge, Wetland District, and Hatchery project leaders with a list of payees, amount paid and acres.

**Records Maintenance**

For quality control purposes, the Realty Management Branch reviewed 47 case files (relocation, real property inventory, and land acquisition case files). The complete case files were microfilmed. The final microfiche was properly filed and the official case file mailed to the appropriate field station.

**Survey and Maps**

The Branch of Surveys and maps performed 56 boundary surveys for land acquisition and management purposes and 55

legal description reviews. The Branch also responded to 251 requests for maps and plats in support of the land acquisition program and other special purpose needs on Regional and National projects.



**Survey Presentation at Realty  
Coordination Meeting**  
Credit: Pat Carroll



**Iron River National Fish Hatchery**  
Credit: Pat Carroll

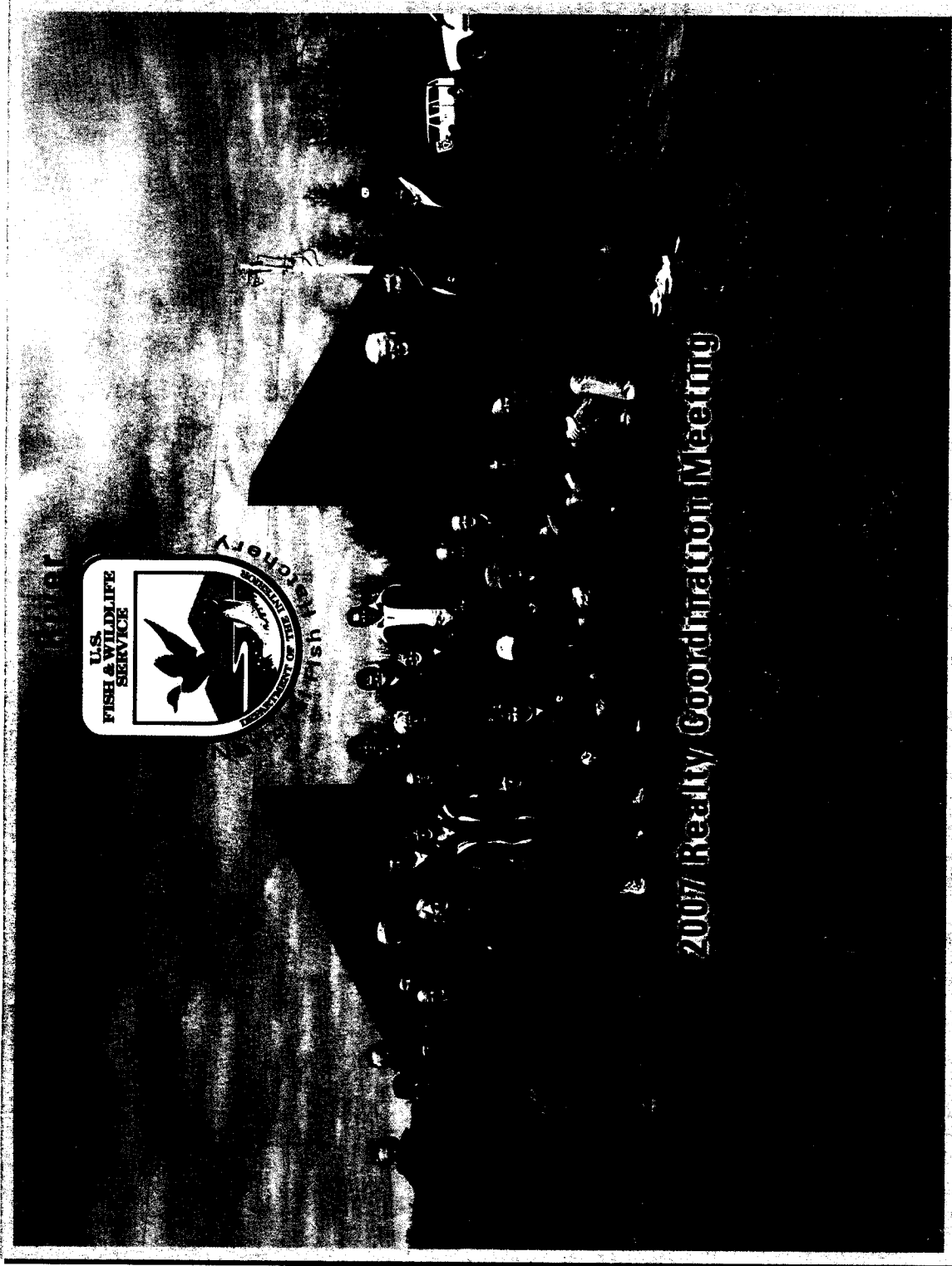
**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service**

**Region 3, NWRS  
Division of Realty  
BHW Federal Building  
1 Federal Drive (Room 530)  
Fort Snelling, MN 55111**

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**Ashland, Wisconsin  
April 2007**



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Division of Conservation Planning *Midwest Region*

## Fiscal Year 2007 Accomplishment Report

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### On Accomplishments

At the end of a fiscal year, when the paperwork has settled, we step back and consider what we achieved. In FY 2007 our list of accomplishments shows a wide range of activities with two common threads:

- *We want our products to be useful, creative, and excellent.*
- *We want to give our customers great service.*

Our customers and our products are at the heart of everything we do in the Division of Conservation Planning. We believe that CCPs, the planning process and GIS contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation, and we want to deliver the best products possible. Our customers are project leaders, field staff, FWS programs in the Midwest Region and across the nation, and conservation agencies throughout the Region. We strive to always be responsive to their needs, courteous, and professional.

This report highlights accomplishments in terms of Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCP), Geographic Information Systems projects, projects with and services for other programs, innovation, and our on-line presence.



*The kick-off meeting for the Muscatatuck NWR CCP was held in March 2007; public scoping was conducted in May and a biological review was conducted in June. The internal draft is in progress.*

### Comprehensive Conservation Planning

The Midwest Region continues to be a leader in completing CCPs. In FY 2007, planners completed three CCPs, bringing our total to 38, or 61 percent of the plans we are scheduled to complete by 2012. The Midwest Region has completed the greatest percentage of CCPs, with other regions ranging from 19 percent completed to 60 percent.

We recognize that this accomplishment isn't ours alone. We have had the privilege of working with field staff who understand the importance of refuge and wetland management district planning and who are organized, efficient people. We work with Area Supervisors whose support of planning makes a world of difference in how smoothly projects run. We also appreciate the individuals in a variety of programs who review draft plans and other documents; their contributions make the process more efficient and the end product a great deal better.

ference in how smoothly projects run. We also appreciate the individuals in a variety of programs who review draft plans and other documents; their contributions make the process more efficient and the end product a great deal better.

This year, our CCP accomplishments included:

- Completed the Record of Decision for the Crab Orchard NWR Environmental Impact Statement/Comprehensive Conservation Plan, and completed the stand-alone version of the CCP
- Completed the Horicon/Fox River NWRs CCP
- Completed the stand-alone CCP for the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR.
- Completed the CCP for Mingo NWR, Pilot Knob NWR and Ozark Cavefish NWR.

*"A goal without a plan is just a wish."*

*Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*

"We plan cooperatively, creatively, and proactively to preserve and manage fish and wildlife resources for the continuing benefit of the American people."

Division of Conservation Planning Mission Statement

*The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time.*

*Abraham Lincoln*

- Published the Draft Rice Lake NWR CCP for public review.
- Prepared the Rice Lake NWR Final CCP for internal review.
- Completed an internal review of the Patoka River NWR CCP.
- Launched the Tamarac NWR CCP effort.
- Launched the Swan Lake NWR CCP project.
- Launched the Muscatatuck NWR CCP project.

## Geographic Information Systems

When it comes to working with others, the Division's Geographic Information System staff are literally all over the map.

The Division's three full-time biologists/GIS specialists and, on a part-time basis, three students work on projects that touch vir-

tually every program and field office in the Region.

Training people to use GIS to manage wildlife and habitat resources more effectively has been a major effort. In FY 2007, GIS staff organized and taught three 3-day sessions on Refuge Lands GIS (RLGIS), a database model that originated in the Midwest Region and has since been retooled as part of a national effort to customize GIS to meet the particular needs of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Fifty people from field stations, Ecological Services, Private Lands and other programs attended the training. Another class was scheduled early in FY 2008 and another course was planned in the spring.

Division staff also participated in teaching an RLGIS "Train the Trainer" session in Denver.

GIS staff support the planning effort by creating an assortment of maps that are used in CCPs, public meetings, biological reviews and alternatives workshops to display proposed management actions.

Other services staff provide to field staff and Regional Office programs include acquiring various software licenses, responding to more than 400 problems submitted via the GIS Help Desk, and training field staff in the use of GIS software and hardware, such as the RECON GPS receiver. Staff provide ongoing assistance to the Regional Pilot in developing effective flight plans for aerial photography missions.

Projects in FY 2007 include:

- Maintained the ArcSDE server to facilitate sharing of spatial data within the region.
- Staff assisted the Regional Historic Preservation Officer with several projects to map archeology sites and to combine datasets for archeology.
- Assisted the Carterville Fishery Resources Office by preparing GIS data and maps depicting U.S. state regulations for grass, bighead, black and silver carp.
- Created a native vegetation map for Tamarac NWR using SURGO soils data.
- Contributed to ground-truth data collection for Neal Smith NWR and Crane Meadows NWR.
- Responded to an OMB request for data on spatial data costs in the Midwest Region.



*GIS staff organized "GIS Day" in November 2006 to increase awareness of GIS and the use of spatial data as a tool in conservation management.*

## Division of Comprehensive Conservation Planning Accomplishments FY 2007

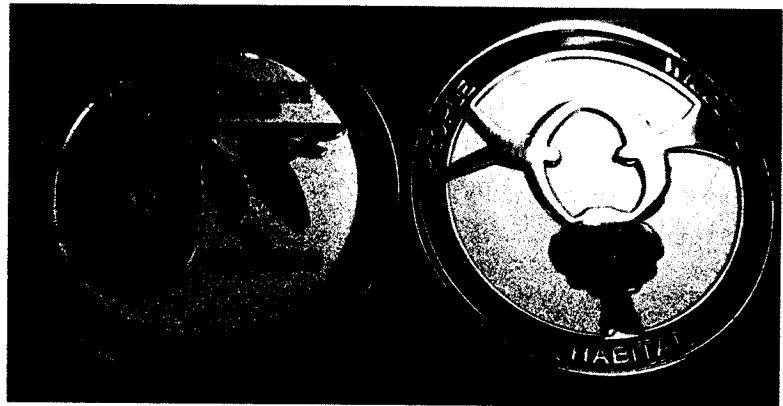
- Developed Colonial Waterbird Colony maps for Ecological Services.
- Created watershed-based focus area maps from the UMRGL Joint Venture modeling effort.
- Modified and created print documents of Private Lands Focus Areas.
- Assisted in developing a presentation on Focus Areas to Project Leaders.
- Designed raptor migration maps for Migratory Birds biologists.
- Provided ongoing assistance to the Fisheries Program in developing Fisheries Focal Areas.
- Staff presented a Wood Duck model to Minnesota Valley NWR staff and Private Lands staff.
- Completed a model for the Tallgrass Prairie Prioritization Program partnership with The Nature Conservancy.

### Working With Others

Planning efforts and GIS activities are connected to a wide array of other programs and other endeavors, and the Division's staff actively participate in a variety of discussions and projects initiated outside of the Division of Conservation Planning.

Accomplishments by Division staff in FY 2007 included:

- Developed a 10-question Focal Area Workbook to help Regional program areas identify their interests in the three proposed Region 3 Focal Areas as part of the Strategic



A "Challenge Coin" was designed to recognize superior staff performance and field staff efforts in completing CCPs.

- Habitat Conservation Initiative.
- Tom Larson assisted External Affairs in producing a critically-acclaimed video on the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's identify crisis for the annual Project Leaders meeting.
- John Schomaker instructed at two CCP courses conducted at NCTC and received an award for his participation in the comprehensive conservation planning course.
- Gary Muehlenhardt completed 16 LAPS data forms for FY 2009 ranking and represented the Midwest Region at the LAPS Revision Workshop.
- Participated in discussions regarding Strategic Habitat Conservation.
- Participated in State Action Plans briefings and represented Refuges on the Regional Office Implementation Team.
- Assisted the Upper Mississippi River NW&FR with the preparation of a draft and final Furbearer Management Plan.
- Assisted Visitor Services by developing a web page and posting revised environmental assessments required as part of a federal lawsuit.
- Helped with covering phones, mail and correspondence needs for the Division of Realty and the Assistant to the Refuges Chief when needed.
- Assisted Fisheries in developing focal areas.
- Assisted field offices with software installation.
- Collected historical aerial photography from all refuge field stations for storage and archiving at EROS Data Center.
- Prepared more than 800 media CDs and DVDs for the distribution of a software upgrade and wrote instructions for installing it and provided telephone support related to the upgrade.

*Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.*

*Will Rogers*

## Division of Comprehensive Conservation Planning Accomplishments FY 2007

*Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning.*

*Thomas Alva Edison*

- Provided CD duplication as needed by many programs.
- Completed orthorectification and mosaics of imagery for many field offices.
- Helped Sherburne NWR and Crane Meadows NWR with a green infrastructure mapping project that will identify potential areas for green or open space between the two refuges.

### Innovation and Efficiency

In the course of our work we encounter tasks and processes that we think could be better, and then we try to make them better. Some of our efforts include:

- Coordinating with the U.S. Geological Survey on expedited approval of visitor surveys.
- Began developing detailed guidance for visitor services planning.
- Experimented with using the Planners Correspondence Tracking System for correspondence and project mailing lists.
- Redesigned the Conservation Planning website using Cascading Stylesheets to make all of the site's pages consistent, reduce the file size of every page, and reduce the amount of time needed to maintain existing pages and create new pages.
- Began using the "Document Tracking System" for all controlled correspondence.
- Began emailing documents to the Federal Register Liaison Team instead of faxing them,

### And Onward: The Planning Schedule Through 2012

Fiscal Year	CCPs Projected to be Completed
2008	Patoka River NWR; Rice Lake NWR; Trempealeau NWR; Seney NWR; Kirtland's Warbler WMA; Swan Lake NWR; Leopold WMD; St. Croix WMD
2009	Muscatatuck NWR
2010	Big Muddy NWR; Big Stone NWR
2011	Crane Meadows NWR; Great Lakes Islands national wildlife refuges: Michigan Islands NWR, Harbor Islands NWR, Huron Island NWR, Gravel Island NWR, Green Bay NWR
2012	Neal Smith NWR; Hamden Slough NWR; Iowa WMD; Boyer Chutes NWR

ensuring that the Team receives clean, complete documents.

### Document and Website Development

The Division's website had an average of 17,000 visitors a month in the past fiscal year (numbers were not gathered for 3 months of FY 2006). The Upper Mississippi River NW&FR planning page drew the vast majority of visitors to the Conservation Planning site through October FY 2007, more than 6 months after the stand-alone CCP was completed.

The Division's Internet website was redesigned in FY 2007 to make the site easier for visitors to load, label every page as a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Midwest Region page, and making the site easier for staff to maintain.

Other efforts included:

- Began researching accessible pdf process to ensure that planning documents posted on

the website are universally accessible.

- Posted information on upcoming public open houses promptly.
- Posted all draft and final CCPs in a timely manner.
- Posted information on the Division's Intranet site that was requested by field staff.
- Reviewed the Division's mail box daily and promptly forwarded e-mail received through the Internet to the appropriate planner.

### In Conclusion

The Division of Conservation Planning team is guided by a spirit of cooperation and optimism. We appreciate each other's professionalism and expertise, and we feel fortunate to work with passionate conservation professionals in the field and the Regional Office. We appreciate every one who worked with us to make FY 2007 a successful year.



**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
FIRE MANAGEMENT  
REGION 3**



**BRIEFING PAPER**

**Prescribed Fire in the Midwest Region 2008**

**Implementation**

The prescribed burn program in the Midwest Region of the Fish and Wildlife Service averages 69,400 acres per year. The prescribed burn treatments are designed, in collaboration with local partners, to cost-effectively reduce risks from unwanted fires to communities and habitats and to maintain and/or enhance those habitats.

In 2008, approximately 70,056 acres were completed through the spring and early summer burning season. Additional acres will be burned in the late summer and early fall. Acres completed by state are identified below.

Illinois	1,297
Indiana	7,018
Iowa	6,988
Michigan	811
Minnesota	44,192
Missouri	1,172
Ohio	337
Wisconsin	<u>8,241</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70,056</b>

Through agreements, many of the prescribed burn treatments are completed with assistance from state cooperators and other Federal agencies, with reciprocal assistance provided by our burn crews.

Recognizing the Service's role in conserving Federal trust resources on off-service lands, this year the Region dedicated one fire position to work solely with private lands prescribed burning. This unique Prescribed Fire Specialist position is funded out of our Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program but works for the regional Fire Management Program. Fish and Wildlife Service prescribed burn projects completed on private lands are identified below.

	<u>Projects</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>TNC Assistance</u>
Indiana	1	189	
Iowa	4	200	
Michigan	2	69	
Wisconsin	<u>8</u>	<u>270</u>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>3 Projects, 400 acres</b>

### Monitoring and Research

Post burn monitoring of treatments is conducted to insure that prescribed burning is accomplishing the identified fuel reduction and habitat improvement objectives.

In cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Region we are continuing a joint Fish & Wildlife Service and US Geological Survey Cattail Marsh Study project that will identify the best conditions to control cattails with fire. The Region is also completing a dendrochronology study at Sherburne NWR, Minnesota, to establish fire history, age structure and vegetation analysis on a naturally significant Oak Savanna. The study will help determine the best return interval for fire in this habitat while reducing the amount of wildland fuels. At Seney NWR, Michigan, a research project is addressing restoration based fuel reduction techniques for mixed pine forests. The research data, which is currently under analysis, will help determine the best alternatives for management of pine with fire. At Big Oaks NWR, a fire dendrochronology study seeks to uncover the burn history at the refuge. Another project at Big Oaks is exploring the influence of fire in grassland areas on the herpetofaunal communities.

### Summary

Through prescribed fire implementation, monitoring, and research, the Midwest Region is maintaining a strong, efficient, objectives based burning program that is grounded in science to meet the needs of current and future fuel reduction and habitat management.

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fire Activity Report



2007

## GREAT LAKES-BIG RIVERS REGION

The response to fire and weather related events started early in 2007 for Region 3. A continuing drought spread essentially throughout the region from winter until late summer. This resulted in less frequent opportunities for prescribed burning, however, due diligence by all fire staff allowed for all prescribed fire and fuels treatment projects to be met. It was, in essence, a challenging year in Region 3, the Great Lakes and Big Rivers Region. As has become the normal sequence the past several years, our fire management program experienced much activity in emergency response, weather impacts, personnel changes and fire program projects, culminating in a year of safe and successful fire program growth and accomplishment.

Weather was the major factor affecting all fire operations during 2007. The effects of changing climate are most evident here in the heartland of the country as extreme fluctuations become more commonplace. Extreme drought periods as evidenced during the first seven to eight months of the year were then followed by extreme wet periods. For example, in MN, the drought period that began in May 2006 abruptly ended essentially August 31, 2007 as we entered into an extreme wet period. The Twin Cities recorded the wettest 30 day period in recorded history as +8.0" of rain fell by October 1. An interesting data analysis from the Midwest Climate Center shows that the following weather patterns have emerged from weather records analyzed between 1895 until 2006. Temperatures have risen from +3.0° (IN) to a high of +1.6° (MN) in each state with the exception of lower peninsula MI which actually dropped -0.1° during this 101 year period and that precipitation has risen in each of our eight states from a low of +1.5"

(MO) to a high of +4.5" (IN). Thus, we are gradually warming and getting wetter based upon this impressive set of weather records. Additional phenological records add further evidence to this changing climate.

Drought conditions existed in many areas of the region. Especially impacted was Northern Minnesota. Extending from the Northwestern corner of the state across the entire northern half of MN, the drought created extreme hydrologic deficits, increased wildfire activity and reduced prescribed burn opportunities. These drought conditions crossed into the upper peninsula of Michigan. This created extreme fire hazard conditions across the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan, directly affecting Seney NWR. The Seney Refuge FMO, fire staff, and additional FWS fire crews from around our region supported the large Sleeper Lake wildfire, which burned primarily on State land. The Sleeper Lake Fire, the third largest in Michigan's history (MI DNR), began with a lightning strike on Aug. 2, 2007, and grew to 18,185 acres before it was controlled. It was fortunate that no refuge land was in the burned area.

The remaining states within the region also experienced many of the same weather related phenomena that have become characteristic to the most recent years. The continued drought conditions affected the NW Missouri/Southern Iowa/Western Illinois region extending into Indiana. This created a challenging scenario from which to conduct fire operations. Much like further North in the region, most all Southern areas of our region received abundant precipitation during the last months of 2007, which alleviated the drought situation. We thus ended the year in a much better position than how we entered it! Ground water levels

are nearing more normal in many previously drought stricken areas.

For 2007, there were 32 wildfires, which burned approximately 1128 acres within Region 3. Staff from Leopold WMD, Necedah NWR and Big Oaks NWR supported Seney NWR during its severe drought period and as previously, the Sleeper Lake Fire. Additional large fire incidents staffed by regional FWS employees included the Big Turnaround Complex on the Okefenokee NWR, Big Cypress Fire on Everglades NP and National Panther Refuge, and the Ham Lake Fire (BWCAW, Superior National Forest). Personnel from Big Stone NWR, Agassiz NWR engine module, Michigan and the Regional Office, just to name a few, assisted on this fire. It was common throughout mid-July to mid September to have 35-40 + R3 fire personnel out on assignments during any given week. Region 3 actively supported the Blue Goose Type 1 FWS fire crew stationed in Moses Lake, WA by detailing personnel to this crew for an excellent fire training experience.

The 2007 prescribed burn and hazardous fuels reduction programs were outstanding successes given the weather challenges that occurred throughout the region. For example, even with extended drought conditions the South Zone exceeded all targets and set a new record for acres treated. The West Zone (Minnesota) utilized a broad array of multi-agency detailers to assist with completing all burn projects. FWS stations in Oregon, California, Texas, Kansas and Nebraska (Quivira and Rainwater Basin) and Iowa contributed personnel and equipment. A NPS Fire Use Module from Buffalo River assisted during the spring prescribed fire season along with a BLM/BIA Fuels Module from California. Region 3 completed a total of 71,755 acres of WUI and HFR accomplishments. A total of 455 WUI and fuels projects were

accomplished, consisting of prescribed fire and various mechanical fuels treatments and entered into the NFPORS database. Of major importance, these excellent accomplishments were all completed with no reportable accidents.

The joint Region 3 and Region 5 FWS and USGS Cattail Marsh Study project has continued forward with important progress made during 2007. Agassiz NWR continues to take full advantage of the drought conditions aiding their draw down efforts in various pools. The refuge conducted a successful growing season burn on the Madsen pool cattail marsh on August 15, 2007. Impressive consumption of the peat was observed with both depth and volume of peat consumed exceeding our expectations. With the peat continuing to burn and smolder safely within the confines of the burn area, and depths as great as 20 inches of consumption were observed. The outcome was truly impressive and provided excellent data to our continued research. In Wisconsin, the Leopold WMD conducted two very successful cattail management burns on the Uihlein WPA management unit. In June, the Pumphouse unit was burned with very impressive combustion of cattail and litter creating ash 6" + in depth. Unfortunately, for burn study monitoring, none of the HOBO dataloggers operated correctly so we were unable to capture temperature and burn duration from this unit. In October, the Waukau pool was burned. This 300-acre unit also burned very well after the drawdown. A combination of continued drought conditions throughout the upper Midwest, in conjunction with pool drawdowns has enabled several of these units to be treated with Rx fire. Continued diligence has begun to pay us dividends, as we are slowly able to collect burn data from several of these units to add to study results.

Superb progress continues on multiple fire ecology studies within the region. At Sherburne NWR, the age structure and vegetation fieldwork was completed during the summer of 2007 for the fire dendrochronology study. What remains is the most challenging aspect to the study and that is to find a sufficient quantity of viable historic fire scars so that the fire return interval or fire regime will be able to be recreated. We anticipate completing this project in FY 2008. The impressive Fire ecology in northern sedge meadows: Factors influencing yellow rails and other birds at Seney National Wildlife Refuge made excellent progress. Researcher Jane Austin, USGS, with refuge support, is conducting this project. Additionally, at Seney NWR, the Joint Fire Science project on "Restoration based fuel reduction recommendations for mixed pine forests of Upper Michigan" is successfully advancing with impressive data collection and analysis efforts. Establishing the historic pre-European settlement, post-European settlement and post refuge establishment fire regimes, fuel loadings, forest composition and structure will aid immensely in developing ecological restoration techniques and alternatives for these red pine dominated ecosystems. The research data is currently under analysis. Big Oaks NWR currently has two additional fire ecology research projects in place. A fire dendrochronology project entitled "The Effect of Fire on Multiple Arboreal Species in the Eastern Deciduous Forest" seeks to uncover the burn history on Big Oaks NWR by modeling and testing the reconstruction of the fire history for the refuge along with documenting the historical range of variability of fire to settlement times in a deciduous forest. This is a truly unique study for us as, traditionally, not a very large amount of fire research has been conducted in these Eastern forests. We feel this research will uncover a tremendous wealth of information to add to

these spectacular forest ecosystems. In addition, a very interesting study on "Influence of fire in grassland areas on the herpetofaunal communities of Big Oaks NWR" is in progress. This study will provide critical information regarding the effects of prescribed fire on reptiles and amphibians allowing us to adjust and improve our future grassland burning methods and techniques. This wide array of studies and current research projects demonstrates our belief that a strong science based fire management program will benefit all of our ecosystems while reducing unnecessary risks to our refuges and communities by prudent fuels and habitat improvement

In 2007, we saw the temporary end to the ever-popular Rural Fire Assistance (RFA) Program. There was no funding allocated to the RFA program in this fiscal year much to the ire of many of our rural fire departments. This has been a truly successful program that we hope will return in the near future. As stated in the past, RFA greatly assists the local fire departments adjacent to NWR's and WMD's to expand their fire fighting capabilities along with providing a great public outreach educational tool that expands our network of local firefighters available to respond to rural incidents.

A strong public outreach program continued in 2007 with the filling of the vacant Fire Outreach Coordinator position. A part-time position was relocated to Agassiz NWR refuge where our new fire outreach coordinator, Lynda Knutsen is stationed. We welcome Lynda's enthusiasm to her new position. As part of our continued effort in outreach, several fire staff from the South Zone in Iowa and Missouri and the regional office staffed our fire booth at the Pheasants Forever National Sport Show in Des Moines, IA in January. More than 25,000

people viewed our fire display during this impressive three-day event.

An active training schedule within the region culminated with all fire personnel receiving IS-700 and IS-800 Incident Management training. We have a well-trained and experienced all-risk incident force and this additional FEMA training keeps all our personnel current. RX-410 Smoke Management training was conducted in WI. We would like to thank Tom Zellmer, WI Zone FMO, for an outstanding job in facilitating this weeklong course.

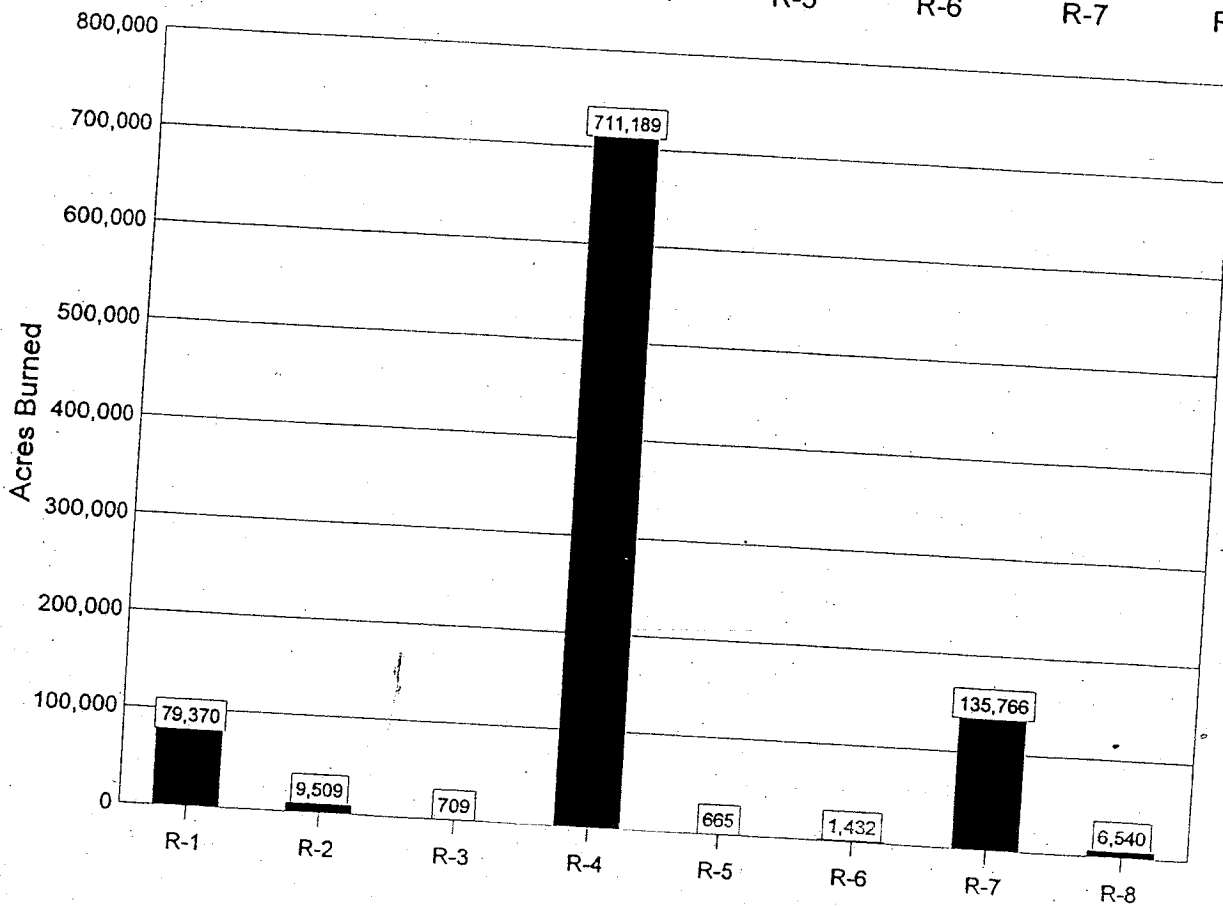
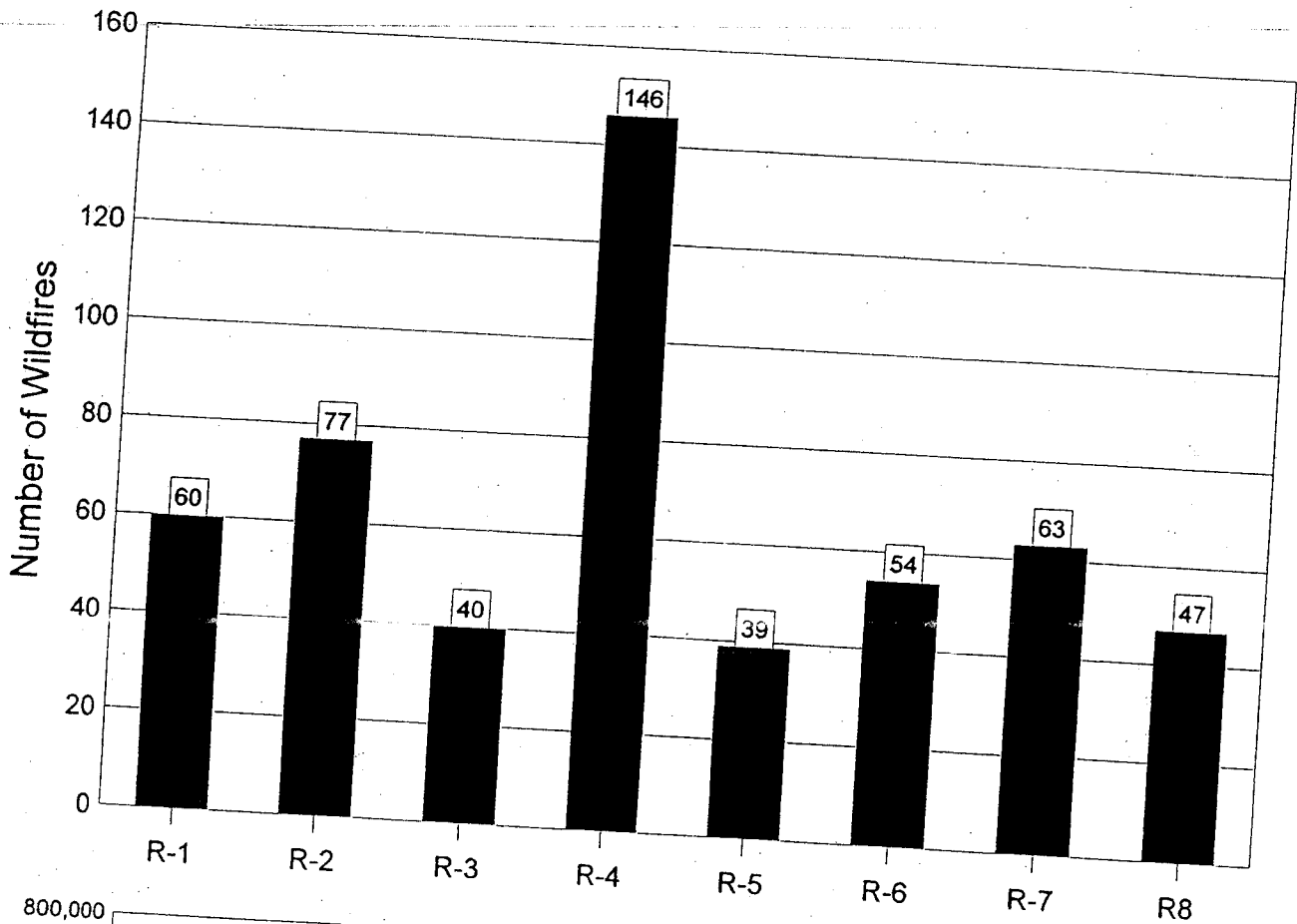
Region 3 personnel have participated in several LANDFIRE and fuels mapping workshops. Testing and troubleshooting map inputs is contributing to further refinements in fire risk ultimately bringing

more accurate base level data to the field. Additionally, FPA is undergoing a major transformation and regional personnel have remained in close contact with this on-going process. We especially want to thank Jim Leach, Refuge Supervisor, from our Regional Office for stepping up as the management team representative to the national FPA Management Advisory Board. This is not an easy task and Jim has done an outstanding job in a complex arena.

In conclusion, 2007 was a superb year of accomplishment given the challenges presented to the Region 3 fire program. We have an experienced fire staff throughout the region, which contributes greatly to safe program growth and development. We look forward to a new and exciting year in 2008

# WILDFIRES

## 2007

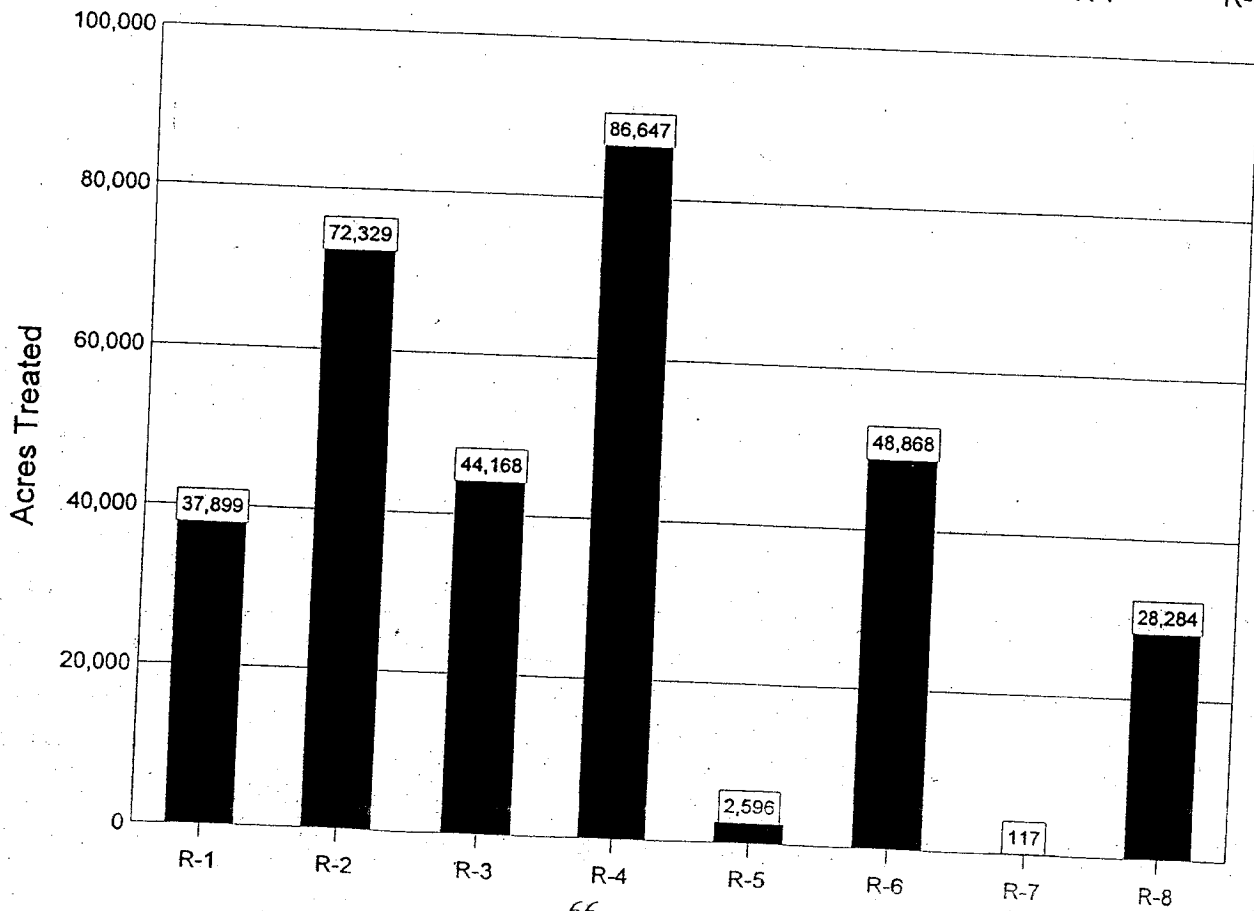
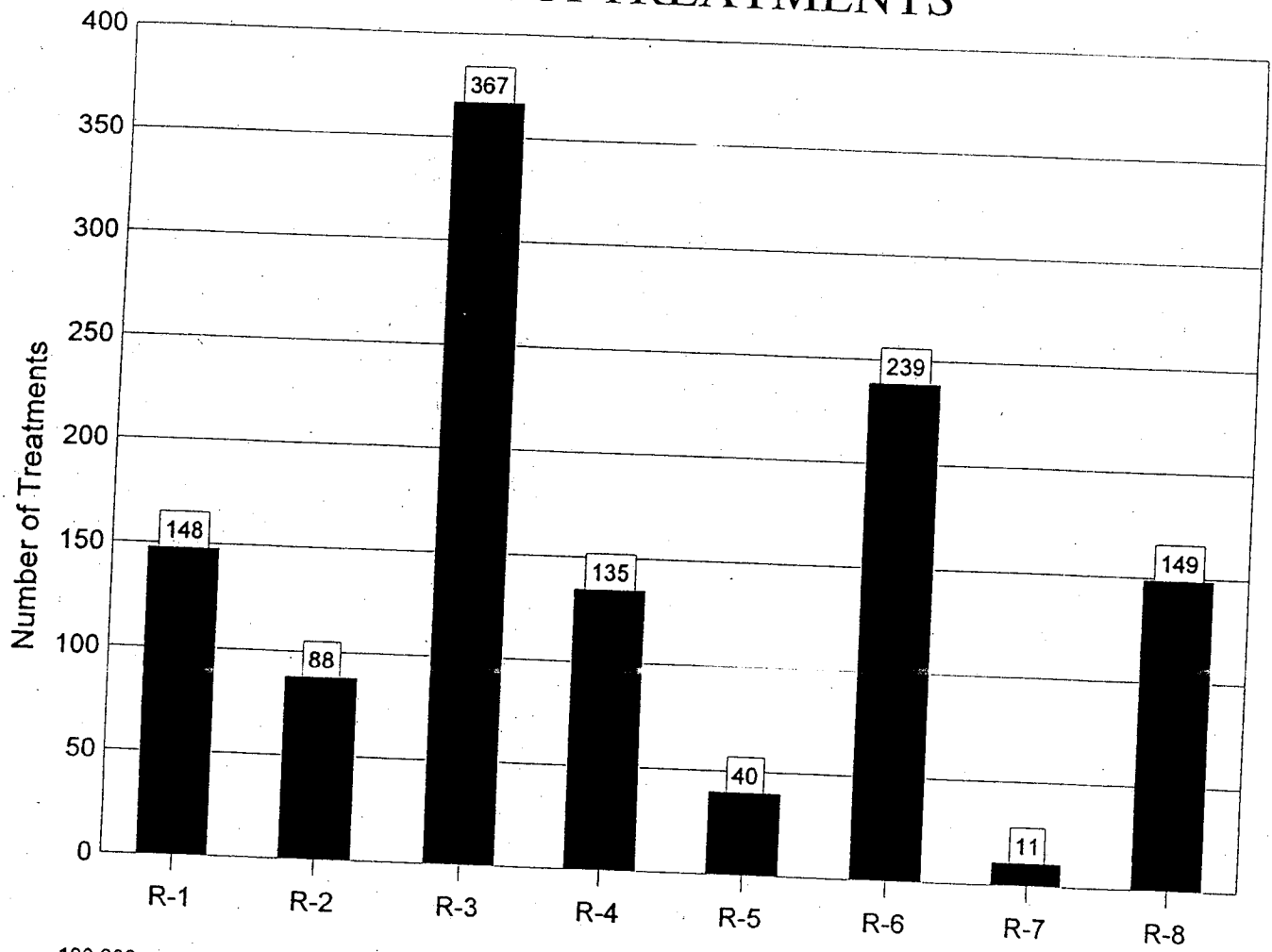


# WILDFIRES

## Great Lakes-Big Rivers Refuges

<u>Refuge</u>	<u># Fires</u>	<u>FWS Acres</u>	<u>Other Owner Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
Big Stone NWR	1	1.4		1.4
Crab Orchard NWR	2	0.4		0.4
Crane Meadows NWR	1	7.0		7.0
Detroit Lakes WMD	7	582.0	408.0	990.0
Horicon NWR	2	3.4		3.4
Leopold WMD	4	7.5		7.5
Litchfield WMD	1	1.0		1.0
Minnesota Valley NWR	5	10.4		10.4
Morris WMD	1	10.0		10.0
Necedah NWR	5	17.8		17.8
Patoka River NWR	1	5.0		5.0
Port Louisa NWR	3	48.4		48.4
Seney NWR	2	2.6		2.6
Sherburne NWR	1	2.0		2.0
Tamarac NWR	3	1.4	5.2	6.6
Windom WMD	1	9.0		9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>709.3</b>	<b>413.2</b>	<b>1,122.5</b>

# NON-WUI TREATMENTS



# NON-WUI TREATMENTS

## Great Lakes - Big Rivers Region

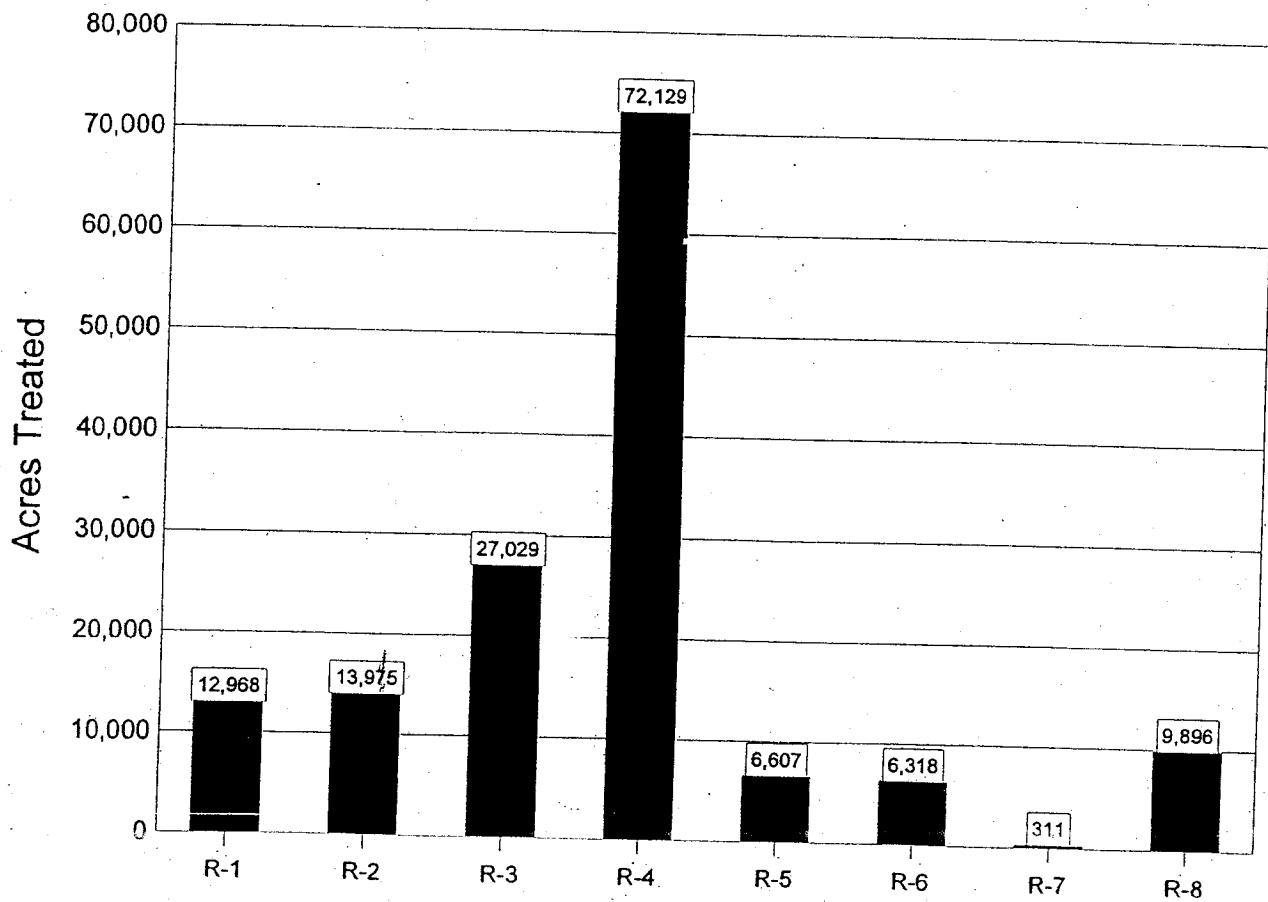
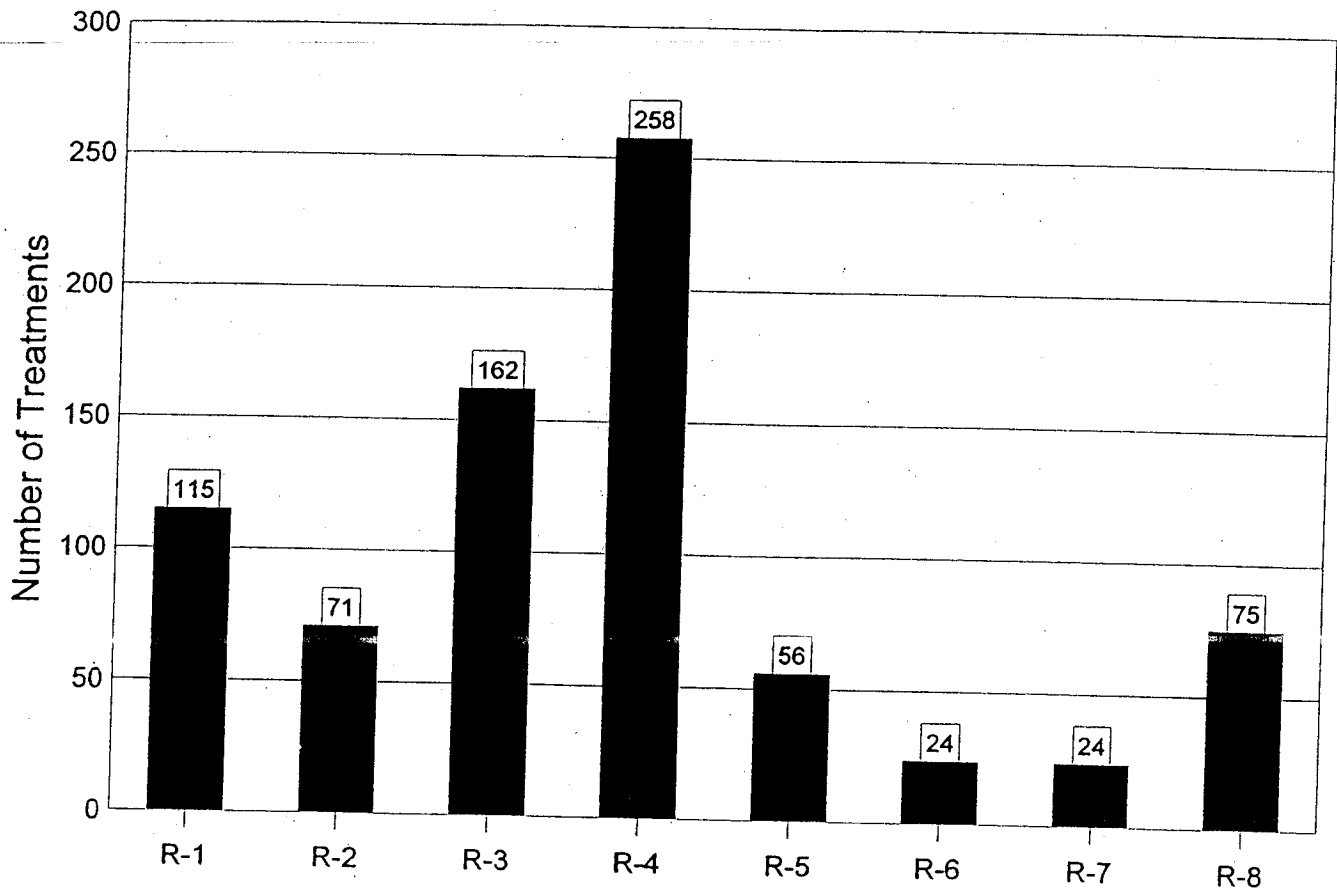
<u>Refuge</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>RX Acres</u>	<u>Mech Acres</u>	<u>Other Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
Agassiz NWR	15	4,941.0			4,941.0
Big Oaks NWR	11	6,937.0			6,937.0
Big Stone NWR	9	568.0			568.0
Crab Orchard NWR	14	1,157.4			1,157.4
Crane Meadows NWR	6	79.0	8.0		87.0
Desoto NWR	10	412.0			412.0
Detroit Lakes WMD	28	4,100.0			4,100.0
Driftless Area NWR	1	103.0			103.0
Emiquon NWR	1	28.0			28.0
Fergus Falls WMD	28	4,206.0			4,206.0
Fox River NWR	12	212.5			212.5
Great River NWR	1	45.0			45.0
Horicon NWR	10	126.5			126.5
Leopold WMD	19	1,399.5			1,399.5
Litchfield WMD	24	3,604.0	100.0		3,704.0
Mingo NWR	2	60.0			60.0
Minnesota Valley NWR	14	1,113.0			1,113.0
Morris WMD	36	3,850.0			3,850.0
Neal Smith NWR	8	1,494.0			1,494.0
Necedah NWR	15	1,203.0	1,417.0	5.0	2,625.0
Port Louisa NWR	18	485.6			485.6
Rice Lake NWR	1	294.0			294.0
Seney NWR	8	1,282.0			1,282.0
Sherburne NWR	9	28.0	37.0		65.0
Shiawassee NWR	2	138.0			138.0

Squaw Creek NWR	7	581.0			581.0
St Croix WMD	8	570.0	139.0	200.0	909.0
Swan Lake NWR	9	182.0			182.0
Tamarac NWR	3	21.0			21.0
Union Slough NWR	6	529.0	22.0		551.0
Upper MS River-La Crosse Dist.	2	46.5			46.5
Upper MS River-Savanna Dist.	4	224.0			224.0
Windom WMD	26	2,220.0			2,220.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>42,240.0</b>	<b>1,723.0</b>	<b>205.0</b>	<b>44,168.0</b>

Other Acres = The number of acres that have been treated by a method other than prescribed fire or mechanical.

# WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

## Treatments - 2007



# WUI TREATMENTS

## Great Lakes - Big Rivers Region

<u>Refuge</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>RX Acres</u>	<u>Mech Acres</u>	<u>Other Acres</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>
Agassiz NWR	3	274.5			274.5
Big Oaks NWR	5	5,044.0			5,044.0
Big Stone NWR	14	2,223.0			2,223.0
Crane Meadows NWR	1	100.0			100.0
Detroit Lakes WMD	7	1,984.0			1,984.0
Fergus Falls WMD	8	923.0			923.0
Horicon NWR	5	989.0			989.0
Iowa WMD	46	3,718.0		180.0	3,898.0
Leopold WMD	4	190.0			190.0
Minnesota Valley NWR	6	262.0			262.0
Morris WMD	5	938.0			938.0
Necedah NWR	17	2,922.0	503.0		3,425.0
Rydell NWR	6	128.0			128.0
Seney NWR	1		500.0		500.0
Sherburne NWR	9	4,393.0			4,393.0
St Croix WMD	20	1,538.0			1,538.0
Windom WMD	5	198.0	21.0		219.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>25,824.5</b>	<b>1,024.0</b>	<b>180.0</b>	<b>27,028.5</b>

Other Acres = The number of acres that have been treated by a method other than prescribed fire or mechanical.



June, 2008

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3 (GREAT LAKES-BIG RIVERS)  
FISHERIES DIVISION**

***FISH PASSAGE PROGRAM UPDATE***

**I. Summary**

The Midwest Fish Passage Program has made significant contributions to aquatic habitat restoration in the Midwest and is working in the field and at the national level to build on these accomplishments and to improve key aspects of the program.

**II. Key Points**

Accomplishments

- Since FY1999, the Region 3 Fish Passage Program has initiated 96 projects, which represent a \$3.8 million investment of federal funds and \$12.1 million in matching partner support.
- Projects are distributed regionally as follows (number of projects in parenthesis): Indiana (1); Iowa (6); Illinois (7); Michigan (41); Minnesota (11); Missouri (11); Ohio (3); and Wisconsin (23). Some projects benefit multiple states.
- Projects have involved culvert renovations, dam removals, installation of fish passage structures or natural by-passes, modification of stream grade control structures, and barrier inventory/assessments.
- To date, 98 barriers have been removed and 775 stream miles reconnected; while projects currently in progress will remove 30 barriers and reconnect an additional 1094 stream miles.
- Projects contribute to restoring the natural flow regime in Midwest rivers and streams and benefit aquatic organisms by making additional habitat available for spawning, rearing and feeding. Many projects also reduce sediment runoff and in-stream water temperatures.
- In addition to resource benefits, some projects improve recreational fishing opportunities and improve public safety by removing unsafe dams.

Current Status

- In FY 2008, the National Fish Passage Program received a \$6 million increase and the Regions worked together to develop a new funding allocation methodology (In FY 2009, the President's budget reflects a \$6 million decrease).
- We are learning more about the biological impacts of our barrier removal activities through

recent monitoring and evaluation efforts conducted in collaboration with our partners. We will use lessons learned to inform future project planning and implementation.

**CONTACT:** Rick Schuldt, Acting Assistant Regional Director-Fisheries 612-713-5418



*June, 2008*

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3  
MIGRATORY BIRDS DIVISION**

***EAGLE PERMITTING UPDATE***

Eagle activities previously authorized under Section 7 and Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act: The final rule was published on May 20, 2008 and contains the following provisions.

- **ESA Section 10 Permits:** Under the revised regulations, currently valid take authorizations for bald and golden eagles originally issued to applicants under ESA section 10 will be automatically covered under these revised Eagle Act regulations as long as the permittee fully complies with the terms and conditions of their ESA permit.
- **ESA Section 7 Incidental Take Statements:** An incidental take statement identifies the level of take that is anticipated from implementation of a project as proposed. The statement contains reasonable and prudent measures and conditions designed to minimize the effects of the take. These measures and conditions must be implemented in order for any take to occur legally. This final rule creates a new, expedited permit under the Eagle Act to provide take authorization to federal agencies for activities originally authorized under ESA section 7.

The Draft Environmental Assessment is due to be released by the end of July. The final rule for eagle take permits is scheduled to be released by the end of September.

For eagle take permits, there will be a queue for allocation. Each region will receive a set number of permits that can be issued. Projects that affect public health and safety will receive first priority. A team will be meeting in Washington at the end of July to develop an implementation plan for the eagle take permit. The team includes Migratory Bird Permit Program Managers from Region 3 and Region 4 as well as Washington staff and Ecological Services representatives.

**CONTACT: Andrea Kirk, Migratory Birds Permitting Office 612-713-5449**



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

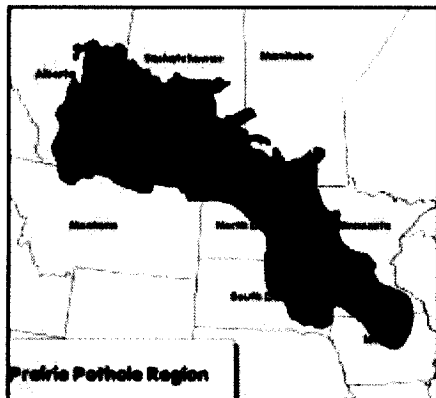
# Small Wetlands Program

*A Half Century of Conserving Prairie Habitat*

## Background

The vision for the Small Wetlands Program emerged in the 1940s when Waubay (*South Dakota*) National Wildlife Refuge Manager Fred Staunton began documenting significant reductions in waterfowl populations. Staunton and many others believed these reductions were the direct result of massive wetland drainage programs across our prairie landscape.

To help permanently protect habitat for North American waterfowl, the Small Wetland Program was officially created in 1958, with an amendment to the 1934 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act (*commonly referred to as the Duck Stamp Act*) allowing proceeds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps to be used to acquire waterfowl production areas.



The Prairie Pothole Region covers 300,000 square miles across the United States and Canada and is known as the duck factory of North America.

## Federal Duck Stamps and Waterfowl Production Areas

All hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts benefit from Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps (*commonly referred to as Federal Duck Stamps*) and waterfowl production areas.

Waterfowl production areas (WPAs) are the on-the-ground result of your purchase of a Federal Duck Stamp.

***The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Small Wetlands Program uses funds from the sale of Federal Duck Stamps to permanently protect waterfowl production areas, nearly 3 million acres so far.***

***Close to one million acres of the land acquired through the Small Wetlands Program is open to hunting, wildlife watching and photography, and other wildlife-dependent outdoor recreation.***

WPAs also provide habitat for resident wildlife and migratory grassland birds, protect native plants, help filter groundwater, control flooding, and capture carbon from the atmosphere.

## Prairie Pothole Region

The Prairie Pothole Region of North America was once the greatest expanse of grasslands and small wetlands on earth. The southern reach of the region was in central Iowa and it extended northwest through Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana and into Canada.

The area was covered with small wetlands, called prairie potholes, that were created when glaciers advanced and retreated over the area. The original density of small wetlands across the region was up to 83 per square mile.

Because of these small wetlands -- and the grasslands and aquatic plants and invertebrates associated with them -- the Prairie Pothole Region is an ideal nursery for waterfowl and has long been called "The Duck Factory" of North America.

Even today, with significant portions of the original wetlands and grasslands gone, the Prairie Pothole Region still produces 50 percent of the United States breeding duck populations.

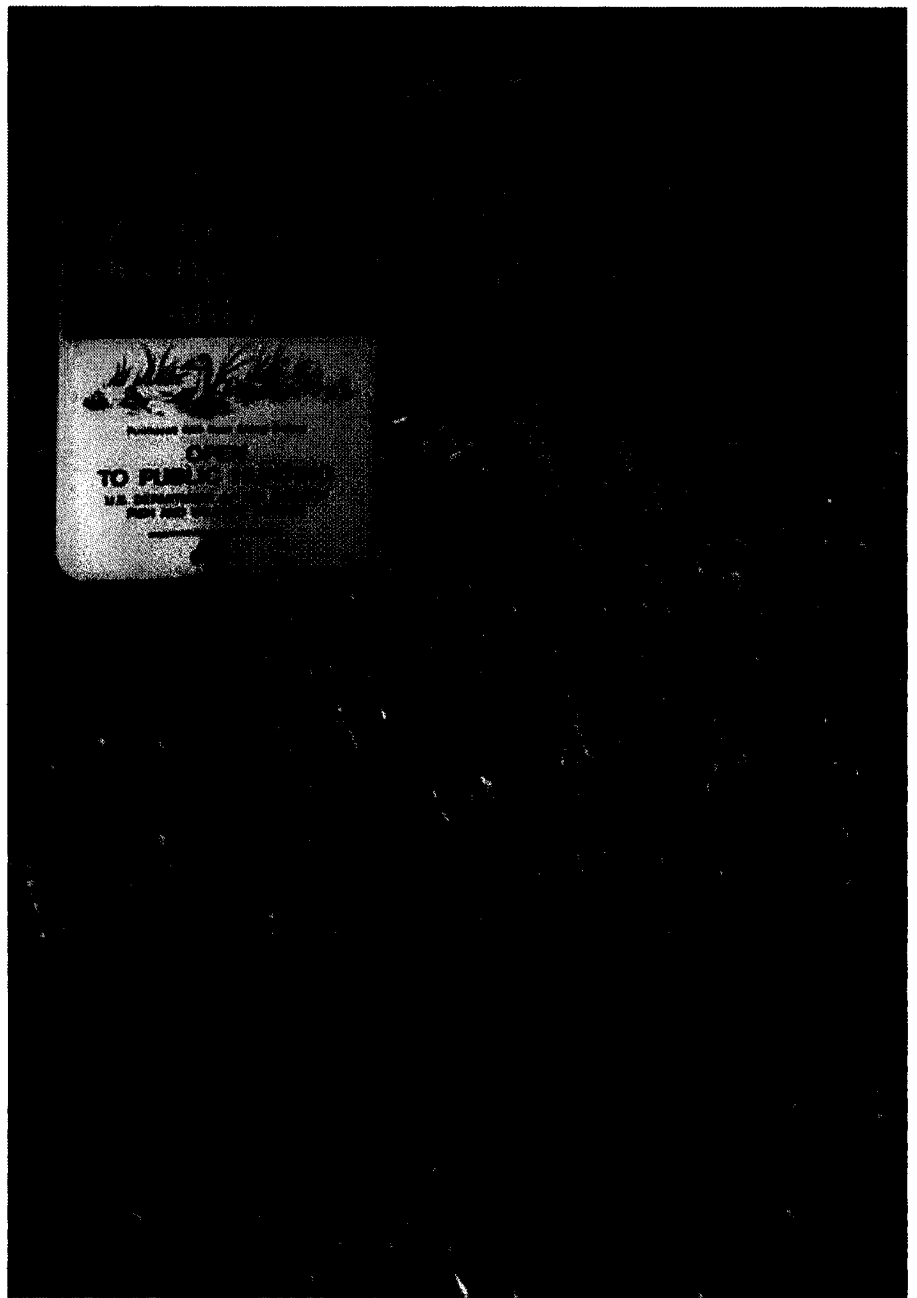
**The easiest thing you can do to protect Prairie Pothole Region habitat, and the birds and wildlife that need this habitat to survive, is to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp and tell your friends to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp.**

**National Wildlife Refuge System and Wetland Management Districts**

Waterfowl production areas are a component of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Refuge System is the only network of federal lands dedicated specifically to wildlife conservation. The Refuge System encompasses 548 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas protecting more than 97 million acres of public land.

Waterfowl production areas account for 18 percent of National Wildlife Refuge System lands in the lower 48 states.

Wetland Management Districts provide oversight and management for all waterfowl production areas in a multi-county area.



**More Information**

For information about the Small Wetlands Program visit our website at:

***<http://refuges.fws.gov/smallwetlands>***

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Midwest Region

## Fisheries & Aquatic Resources Program

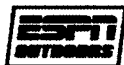
### NFHAP News from the Midwest

A quarterly newsletter highlighting aquatic conservation in the Midwest in support of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP)

#### Midwest Fish Habitat Partnerships Receive \$50,000 More Fish Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation continues to show support for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan through fund-raising and using some of these funds to assist strategic planning efforts of the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) through the More Fish Campaign. The grant will supply seed funds to five FHPs (Driftless Area Restoration Effort, Great Lakes Habitat Partnership, Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership, Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership, and Fishers and Farmers Partnership of the Upper Mississippi River Basin) to support the regional scale strategic planning necessary to guide aquatic habitat restoration and preservation efforts to improve sportfish such as walleye, lake sturgeon, bass, and trout as well as imperiled species such as Topeka shiner, the green floater mussel, hellbenders and other aquatic species.

The More Fish Campaign is a five-year initiative launched by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to raise awareness and funding to protect, conserve and enhance the nation's fish populations and their habitat. The More Fish Campaign aims to improve aquatic habitat in rivers, lakes, reservoirs, estuaries, coastal and marine zones. The grant was made possible through partner contributions from the B.A.S.S. Federation Nation, ESPN-Outdoors, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To find more information on the More Fish Campaign, or to make a donation go to [www.nfwf.org/morefish/](http://www.nfwf.org/morefish/).



**Service Mission Statement:** Our mission is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

**NFHAP Mission Statement:** Protect, restore and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.

## National Spotlight Shines on Big Spring Branch, Wisconsin and Trout Run, Minnesota

At the annual Congressional Casting Call held on the Potomac River in late April, the nation's leading authorities on aquatic resources announced the 2008 *Ten Waters to Watch* list. Big Spring Branch in Wisconsin and Trout Run in Minnesota have both been recognized as two of the top 10 stream and riparian habitat restoration ventures in the nation. Both projects have been supported by NFHAP through the Driftless Area Restoration Effort. The *Ten Waters to Watch* list celebrates the improvements to fishery habitat and water quality being made by local communities every day in this country. Local grassroots partnerships have raised the funds, designed the restoration, and have begun implementing these projects with the assistance of state and federal fisheries biologists.

Trout Run is situated in a narrow valley where the stream and associated floodplain are often confined by bedrock outcroppings. The landscape in this focus watershed is dominated by row crops and grazing cattle—contributing to land erosion and sedimentation in the streambed. As a consequence, several reaches of Trout Run are non-characteristically wide and shallow, with stream velocities insufficient to scour fine sediments. These areas lack sufficient habitat for spawning, feeding, and resting, as well as overhead cover, which provides security for adult trout. The Hiawatha Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District are helping landowners implement best management practices within the watershed to reduce soil loss and runoff to Trout Run Creek.

Trout Unlimited, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and several other partners are engaged in a multiple year endeavor aimed at stabilizing eroding banks and installing natural in-stream structures to create scour pools, increase stream velocity, and enhance sinuosity at Big Spring Branch. The work will restore a diversity of healthy habitats for trout, amphibians, and reptiles. Boxelder is also being removed where it is a problem and native prairie seed is being replanted in the riparian corridor. Project partners are working with landowners to install stream fords, restrict livestock access by fencing, and incorporate other best management practices in the watershed to complement instream enhancement efforts. Nearby wetland scrapes are also being created as a part of this project, to increase breeding habitat for amphibians and other wetland-dependent species. For more information contact Louise Mauldin at [louise\\_mauldin@fws.gov](mailto:louise_mauldin@fws.gov).



Preconstruction at Big Spring Branch -Lack of flow in stream section. Riparian zone is full of invasive boxelder. Photo courtesy H.&L. Nohr Chapter TU.



Post construction -Improved stream velocity. Weirs were installed to create pools. Boxelder was removed. Photo courtesy H.&L. Nohr Chapter TU.

## NFHAP Mission Has Local Connection

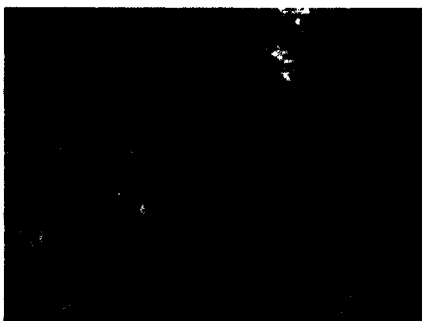
The Bad River watershed culvert assessment program in the Lake Superior Basin is an excellent example of embracing the NFHAP mission at the local level. It is a model of how improving an exceptional fishery resource is important to numerous local, tribal and grassroots organizations.

The watershed is a largely undeveloped, largely forested area that covers nearly 700,000 acres in Northern Wisconsin. With over 1,100 miles of perennial streams, and 390 miles of cold or cool-water habitat, the Bad River Watershed supports one of the most diverse fish assemblages in the Lake Superior Basin. There are many reasons why so many people care about the watershed. It spawns and nurses brook trout and lake sturgeon and it forms the Bad River/Kakagon Sloughs at its mouth - the largest pristine estuary in the upper Great Lakes (almost 10,000 acres). Several state listed threatened and endangered species inhabit the watershed, including the state endangered wood turtle. The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa reservation is located in the lower one-third of the watershed. Sturgeon, and the wild rice that grows in the streams and sloughs are important culturally and as a staple part of the Bad River Chippewa diet.

A network of roads and their stream crossings at 1,122 locations in the watershed is one of the largest threats to stream and fishery health in the watershed. Most of these streams drain under these roads through culverts that pose barriers to fish, deliver excess sediment into the streams, and too often are replaced with little or no consideration for fish or their habitat.

To assess the magnitude of the threat, the Bad River Watershed Association (BRWA) and the USFWS have, over the last 4 years, inventoried and evaluated these crossings to determine if sites pose fish passage barriers or excessive sedimentation. Over half of the 1,122 sites in the watershed have been evaluated. The data shows that 26% of culverts have significant erosion at the site, 94% of culverts are not embedded, 20% are perched, and 19% are velocity barriers for juvenile fish. To begin addressing these problems, the BRWA also developed criteria for identifying the crossings that had the most problems and met with local road crews and town boards for their feedback. From this, priority sites for fish passage, habitat restoration and town road needs were identified.

Several partners in the watershed have been working steadily to deal with four to six problem sites each year. Piece by piece these dedicated partners are restoring this watershed, with the goal of healthier fish populations and high quality habitats downstream for other aquatic species. Local partnership efforts, such as this, are where NFHAP goals connect with dirt for better habitat, more fish and hope to future generations. For more information contact Pam Dryer at [pam-dryer@fws.gov](mailto:pam-dryer@fws.gov).

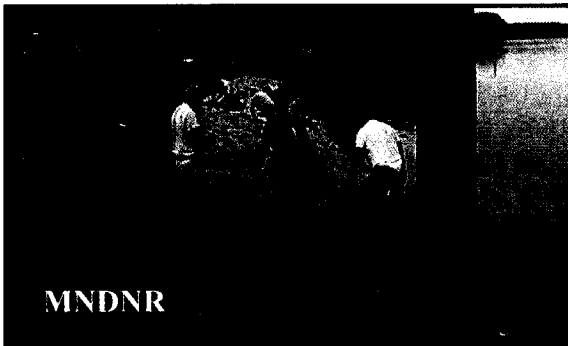


A culvert on Trout Brook in the Bad River Watershed. The inventory identified several fish passage and other problems: it is perched approximately 1.5 feet, the culvert bottom is rusting away, the cover over the culvert is less than 1 foot and it is not embedded. (photo taken looking downstream)



View of a perched culvert creating a fish barrier on Billy Creek in the Bad River Watershed. The old culvert was also failing structurally and erosion was occurring on both the downside and upstream side of culvert.

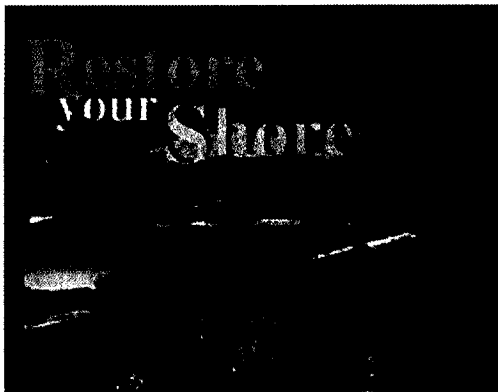
## Wishing for More Fish - Granted!



location will host a partnership workshop that will focus on the Fish Habitat Partnership, with one location also hosting a shoreline restoration project and another focusing on shoreland restoration outreach to lake associations.

The shoreline restoration effort will take place on Lower Whitefish Lake in Crow Wing County, MN, one of The Nature Conservancy's priority lakes and a popular fishing lake. It is also home to walleye that provide spawn for the Minnesota DNR's Pine River egg take operation each spring. The landowner is interested in restoring 200 feet or more of his shoreline, which is prone to erosion. To partner with this property owner, we turned to the local lake association (Whitefish Area Property Owners Association) and they

agreed to help with the restoration work and donated \$1,000 to the cause. The Minnesota B.A.S.S. Federation Nation also pledged to donate work hours on this project. We anticipate completing this restoration project in mid-summer.

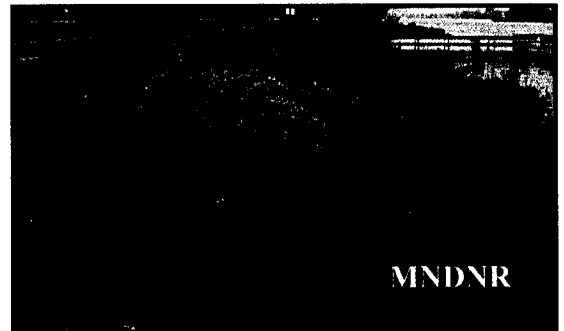


A guide to protecting and restoring the natural beauty of your shoreland.

The outreach component of this grant is truly in the spirit of Fish Habitat Partnerships. As mentioned in the last *Highlights*, Minnesota developed a successful shoreline restoration program and published a book and interactive CD to help lakeshore owners restore their shoreline. This grant will allow us to distribute copies of *Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality* and *Restore Your Shore* CD ROM to lake associations in Indiana. We will develop an addendum to include information specific to the landscapes and regulations of Indiana (e.g. plant lists, native plant nurseries and information on state resources available for shoreland restoration). Curriculum is being

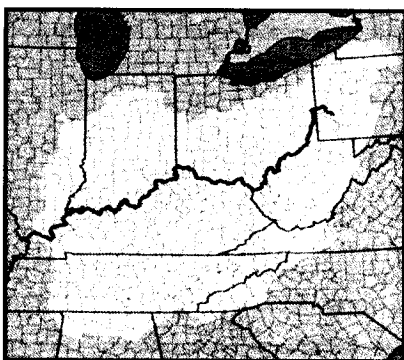
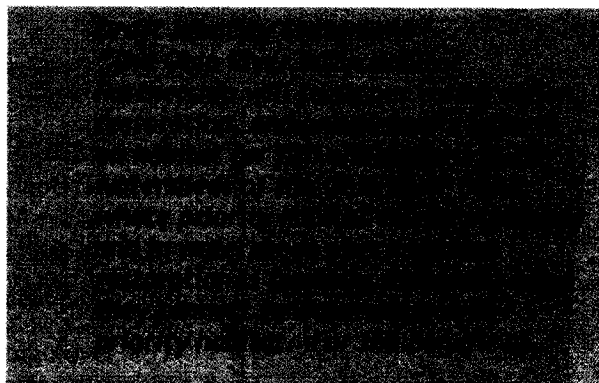
developed for a pilot half-day workshop for shoreland property owners, with the goal of introducing lakescaping concepts, presenting the tools to develop lakescaping plans on individual properties, and visiting successful examples in the field. As part of the workshop, participants will receive a copy of the book, Indiana addendum, and CD, and will subsequently be eligible for state grant funding for local lakeshore restoration projects. Working together, we are able to adapt a successful program in one state for use in another, saving the time, money and energy.

We look forward to using this opportunity to show what our partnership, working with others, can do to benefit fish and fish habitats. For more information, please contact Pat Rivers at [pat.rivers@dnr.state.mn.us](mailto:pat.rivers@dnr.state.mn.us).



## Ohio River Partners Find Their Identity

The first major gathering of the Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership, held in Frankfort, KY in mid-April, was attended by over 40 people representing 22 organizations committed to aquatic habitat conservation in the Ohio River Basin. The purpose for the gathering was to introduce everyone to the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and to identify how we can come together as a group to move aquatic habitat conservation and restoration efforts in the Ohio River Basin forward in a strategic manner. The group developed a draft 'identity' statement from which we will further develop a mission and vision.



Ohio River Basin Photo courtesy of Karl Musser

An interim governance structure including a governing body with a partnership coordinator, and a number technical committees were identified as follows. Rob Simmonds of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cartersville National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office was elected to be the Partnership Coordinator.

- Steering Committee (8 people)
- Partnership Development/Maintenance Committee (4)
- Strategic Planning Committee (7)
- Science/Monitoring Committee (12)
- Outreach Committee (3)
- Implementation Committee (2)

It is truly an exciting time for the Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership as we look forward to a very productive rest of 2008! For more information or if you are interested in a committee assignment, please contact Rob Simmonds at [rob\\_simmonds@fws.gov](mailto:rob_simmonds@fws.gov).

## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Host NFHAP Workshop

From June 3-4, the Fish and Wildlife Service will host a workshop at the Great Rivers Museum in East Alton, IL given by the five recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHP) for the five Candidate FHPs that are operating all or in part in the Midwest Region. The purpose of the workshop is to bring the individuals who pioneered the original 5 pilot partnerships in developing governing structures, habitat assessments, strategic plans, and outreach materials to help meet the goals and objectives of NFHAP. The core work groups from the Great Lakes Basin Habitat Partnership, Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership, Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership, Fishers and Farmers Partnership of the Upper Mississippi River Basin, and the Great Plains Prairie Partnership will have two days to learn what worked and what didn't as those that have gone before them explain the details of how they approached many of the challenges that FHPs face. A combination of formal presentations, panel discussions, and personal one-on-one contact with those that designed the assessments and prepared the planning documents coach the next generation to accept the FHP challenge to lead our nation in aquatic conservation. For more information contact Maureen Gallagher at [maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov).



Paddlewheel on the Mississippi River



### National Highlights

- Ten Waters to Watch List released in April ([www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org))
- NFHAP Board expected to endorse Demonstration Projects for Candidate FHPs at the May Board meeting ([www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org) under the Action Plan tab then scroll down to "Tab 11")
- New NFHAP Communications Committee Coordinator, Ryan Roberts, selected
- U.S. Geological Survey releases a draft list of research needs to support NFHAP ([www.fishhabitat.org](http://www.fishhabitat.org) under the Action Plan tab then scroll down to "Tab 10")

### Upcoming Events

May

13-14 NFHAP Board meeting, Arlington VA

June

3-4 Midwest Regional NFHAP Workshop, East Alton, IL

July

TBD Multi-State Conservation Grant Applications Due

### USFWS NFHAP Contact Information

#### Midwest Regional Coordinator

Maureen Gallagher, Fishery Biologist  
Northwest Missouri State University  
660-562-1008  
[maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)

#### Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership

Maureen Gallagher, Fishery Biologist  
Northwest Missouri State University  
660-562-1008  
[Maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:Maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)

#### Great Lakes Basin Habitat Partnership

Mark Brouder, Project Leader  
Ashland NFWCO  
715-682-6185 ext. 11  
[mark\\_brouder@fws.gov](mailto:mark_brouder@fws.gov)

#### Driftless Area Restoration Effort

Louise Mauldin, Fishery Biologist  
La Crosse NFWCO  
608-783-8407  
[louise\\_mauldin@fws.gov](mailto:louise_mauldin@fws.gov)

#### Fishers and Farmers Partnership

Scott Yess, Assistant Project Leader  
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608-783-8432  
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#### Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership

Rob Simmonds, Project Leader  
Carterville NFWCO  
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[rob\\_simmonds@fws.gov](mailto:rob_simmonds@fws.gov)



June, 2008

## U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3

### *MIDWEST REGION STRATEGIC HABITAT CONSERVATION*

Issue: Update on the Application of Strategic Habitat Conservation in Region 3

Key Point: Region 3 efforts are still in the early stages of institutionalizing the Strategic Habitat Conservation framework as the Region's conservation business model.

#### Background:

A strategic approach to conservation is timely given the current climate of lean budgets, increasing demands for accountability, and deteriorating conditions faced by many of our trust resources due to a myriad of factors ranging from climate change to invasive species to expanding urbanization. Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) answers these challenges by offering efficiencies, better prioritization, and a strong, transparent basis for taking action.

SHC is a science-based framework for making management decisions about where and how to deliver conservation efficiently to achieve specific biological outcomes. Region 3's strategic conservation approach will include all Service programs and address both habitat and non-habitat factors limiting fish and wildlife populations. SHC is a way of thinking and of doing business that requires us to set biological goals and specific objectives, allows us to make strategic decisions about our work, and encourages us to constantly reassess and improve our actions.

Strategic habitat conservation incorporates these elements – biological planning, conservation design, conservation delivery, monitoring and research – in a framework that allows change (adaptive) and repetition (iterative).

#### Current Status:

Region 3 is in the early stages of implementing the SHC initiative. The following points highlight activities to date:

- July, 2006 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Directorate accepted the National Ecological Assessment Team's Strategic Habitat Conservation report.
- A national Executive Oversight Committee and national Technical Advisory Team have been formed to oversee and facilitate implementation of SHC.
- February, 2007 the FWS Director asked each Region to identify focal areas that were geographically and biologically based that support landscape level conservation.

- November, 2007 Region 3 conducted an SHC workshop as an initial orientation to SHC and in preparation for a subsequent focal area workshop. Representatives from the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Iowa and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources participated.
- November, 2007 Region 3 Field stations are queried for examples of existing SHC projects to be used in the compilation of a catalog to document existing SHC efforts and expertise.
- January, 2008 an SHC/structured decision making workshop was held in La Crosse, WI that allowed FWS staff representing the SHC focal areas to go through a structured decision making process and to utilize rapid prototyping techniques to explore the SHC framework. Representatives from the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Iowa and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources participated.
- February, 2008 national release of *Strategic Habitat Conservation Handbook A Guide to Implementing the Technical Elements Of Strategic Habitat Conservation*
- March, 2008 the national SHC Cross-Regional Forum is established and holds their first monthly conference call with the goal of sharing SHC information and coordinating across Regions.
- March, 2008 a Region 3 cross-programmatic brainstorming session is held to identify priorities for consideration by a Regional SHC Support Team.
- April, 2008 the 14 member Region 3 SHC Regional Support Team (Support Team) is established to provide leadership and assistance in the implementation of SHC, promote greater understanding and acceptance of SHC concepts throughout the Region, bring SHC tools and focus to emerging challenges and issues, and ensure consistency with national direction. The team includes representatives from Refuges, Ecological Services, Partners for Fish & Wildlife, Fisheries, Migratory Birds, and the U.S. Geological Survey.
- May, 2008 the Support Team holds a web-based conference call, approves a charter for submission to the Regional Directorate, drafts 3 tentative goals, and agrees to meet and develop an operating plan for 2008-2009.

#### The Future:

- The Support Team will develop and implement an annual operating plan with objectives and specific strategies to facilitate Region 3 SHC implementation.
- An SHC Intranet website will be developed.
- The SHC Examples Catalog will be finalized and posted on the SHC Intranet site.
- All existing pertinent SHC information and links will be posted on the Intranet site.
- An Internet website will be developed to share SHC information with partners and the public.

**FWS Contact: Tom Larson, Chief, Division of Conservation Planning, 612/713-5430**



June, 2008

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3 (GREAT LAKES-BIG RIVERS)  
DIVISION OF ECOLOGICAL SERVICES**

***VIRAL HEMORRHAGIC SEPTICEMIA (VHS) UPDATE***

**I. Summary**

VHSv is an internationally reportable fish pathogen with the OIE, the World Organization for Animal Health. Until the spring of 2008, the occurrence of the virus in the Great Lakes had been limited to the watersheds of all the Great Lakes except Lake Superior. This included inland waters of New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The first occurrence of this virus outside the Great Lakes Basin has now been documented. Ovarian samples taken in Spring 2008 from spawning muskellunge in the Clear Fork Reservoir near Mansfield, OH, tested positive in preliminary tests for the virus, and those tests were validated this week by the national reference lab. The Clear Fork Reservoir is within the Ohio River drainage.

**II. Discussion**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) issued an emergency rule in the fall of 2006 to prevent the spread of VHS from the Great Lakes watershed. The rule quarantined all transportation of susceptible fish species from the states and provinces bordering the Great Lakes. The rule was later amended to allow transportation from facilities that have undergone fish health inspections and found to be negative for the virus. The emergency rule restricts fish movement along state lines, not watersheds, even though several states have only a small portion within the Great Lakes Basin. Ohio, like other Great Lakes States, issued their own emergency rules dividing the state geographically (Great Lakes vs. Ohio River), to prevent the spread of the virus by humans. Ohio's rule focuses on preventing the movement of live fish, including baitfish from bait dealers and anglers, outside of the Great Lakes Basin.

FWS increased monitoring for VHSv as part of the National Wild Fish Health Survey in 2007. However, a \$477,000 reduction in the funding for this program in the FY08 OMB passback forced us to reduce sampling and diagnostics. The Ohio Department of Wildlife has a reimbursable agreement in place with the Service to provide fish health support for their hatchery program. The positive finding of VHSv by the FWS LaCrosse Fish Health Center was in ovarian fluid samples taken from muskellunge brood fish in support of Ohio stocking programs.

Region 3 and the Division of National Fish Hatchery System have requested \$100,000, from the Director's Deferred Allocation to begin an enhanced monitoring program in this watershed in cooperation with the Ohio DNR. An additional \$100,000 would be needed for the Midwest Region to restore VHS surveillance capability in the Great Lakes to the level that existed before the FY2008 funding reduction. Early detection of this virus is essential to allow states to implement regulations to prevent further spread of this pathogen. In the face of the spread of this economically and biologically significant pathogen, the loss of Service capability through the Wild Fish Health Survey program is one of the most significant programmatic shortfalls facing the Fisheries Program in FY2009, if funding is at the request level or through a full year CR at the FY2008 level.

The Service is working with the Ohio DNR and APHIS to publicize this finding and slow the spread of this virus to other waters.

**PREPARED BY:** Todd Turner, (612)713-5127 **DATE:** June 9, 2008

**UPDATED BY:** Gary Frazer, (202)208-6394 **DATE:** June 13, 2008



June, 2008

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3 (GREAT LAKES-BIG RIVERS)  
FISHERIES DIVISION**

***MULTISTATE GRANT REQUEST - SUPPORT FOR FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP IN THE MIDWEST  
(ND, SD, MN, WI, IA, MO, IL, In, OH, KY, TN, VA, WV, GA, NC)***

**I. Summary**

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) is a national approach to strategically implement priority on-the-ground aquatic habitat conservation and restoration projects by working through Fish Habitat Partnerships.

**II. Details**

There are currently five Fish Habitat Partnerships (Partnerships) in the Midwest:

- 1) Driftless Area Restoration Effort (recognized partnership)
- 2) Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership (candidate partnership)
- 3) Great Lakes Basin Partnership (candidate partnership)
- 4) Fishers and Farmers Partnership of the Upper Mississippi River Basin (candidate partnership)
- 5) Ohio River Basin Habitat Partnership (candidate partnership)

These partnerships have committed to working together to coordinate and share resources to support the functions as outlined by the Action Plan Board at their May meeting.

Trout Unlimited has submitted a Letter of Intent for a Multistate Conservation Grant on their behalf and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has requested a full grant proposal by July 9. The \$481,000 request will allow the partnerships to support a regional infrastructure of shared planning, science, GIS analysis, and outreach to support the individual partnerships.

Establishing a Regional infrastructure will enhance measuring and reporting results that will identify the combined accomplishments of the Midwest Partnerships. It will also support the Action Plan's Science and Data Committee in developing and maintaining an assessment program of national aquatic habitat. Specific products resulting from this grant are 5 strategic plans (1 for each Partnership), a GIS database and technical staff that will jointly support the GIS needs. Each of the four candidate Partnerships will apply for full partnership status within two years of receiving these funds.

This project will develop an operational model for workload management and communication between the Midwest Partnerships that will be presented to the Action Plan Board and other Partnerships across the country as a means of addressing common issues.



*June, 2008*

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE REGION 3 (GREAT LAKES-BIG RIVERS)  
FISHERIES DIVISION**

***GREAT LAKES FISH AND WILDLIFE RESTORATION ACT UPDATE***

**I. Summary**

- On October 11, 2006, the President signed the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act (Act) into law (PL 109-326). The Act provides funding authority for Service operations and for fish and wildlife restoration projects in the Great Lakes.
- The Act provides an important vehicle to achieve fish and wildlife restoration activities recommended by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration authorized under President Bush's Executive Order 13340.
- The Act allows the Service, other Federal agencies, states and tribes to work in an effective partnership to provide funding for restoration and management of fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin. Annually, the Service requests state and tribal agencies to develop fish and wildlife restoration proposals for funding.

**II. Background**

- Originally enacted in 1990, the Act established six Great Lakes goals for the Service and authorized funding for the Service's Fishery Program operations.
- The 1998 reauthorization established the Proposal Review Committee and placed a new emphasis on the implementation of restoration projects to benefit Great Lakes fish and wildlife and their habitat.
- The 2006 reauthorization revised the Proposal Review Committee membership to include fish and wildlife members appointed by state directors and Indian tribes and placed the Committee under the Service's guidance.
- Since 1998, the Act has provided more than \$4.5 million to the Service for the grant program, generated more than \$3 million in matching partner support for Great Lakes restoration projects, and has involved over 60 organizations.
- To date, 78 restoration projects have been funded focusing on restoring wetlands; fish community assessment and modeling; ecological monitoring; developing ecosystem management goals; fish health and fish genetics.

**III. Current Status**

- Approximately \$626,000 is available for grants in FY 2008, including \$65,000 remaining from FY 2007. In FY 2008 the Service received 59 pre-proposals requesting nearly \$4.5 million in funding and pledging \$2.1 in matching support. Of these pre-proposals, 22 are focused on wildlife, 35 on fisheries and two on other subjects.
- Through the Act's legislative authority, the Service oversees the competitive, merit-based review and project recommendation process that culminates with the Director's decision on the final project funding approval.
- The Service has specific budget authority up to \$16 million (current appropriations = \$1.6 million) to implement fish and wildlife restoration projects as well as Service activities of regional importance.

**CONTACT:** Rick Schuldt, Acting Assistant Regional Director—Fisheries 612-713-5418



## Quick Facts

### Illinois State Facts

- The Service employs 121 people in Illinois
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Illinois totaled \$6.8 million
- Ten National Wildlife Refuges in Illinois total more than 124,000 acres
- In 2004, more than 1 million people visited national wildlife refuges in Illinois to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Illinois

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

- In 2006 Illinois received:
  - \$8 million for sport fish restoration
  - \$5.7 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education
- Wildlife Restoration Act fund helps with the management of forests and grasslands which result in improved recreational opportunities for hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts. Overall funds have helped the state purchase six waterfowl management areas improving over 72,500 acres of wildlife habitat.

### Bald Eagle Recovery Efforts

The Rock Island Ecological Services Office coordinates nationwide efforts to recover the federally threatened bald eagle

### Cache River Basin

At Cypress Creek National Wildlife Refuge, home of the oldest living plants east of the Mississippi River, a partnership including the Service, Ducks Unlimited, the State of Illinois and The Nature Conservancy is preserving and restoring the Cache River Basin, recognized as one of the country's most unique natural areas and designated a Wetland of International Importance.



### Aquatic Nuisance Species

A partnership of state, federal and private groups is working together to control the invasion of aquatic nuisance species in Illinois' waterways. Recognized as threats to native fish, wildlife, and plants, as well as to the economy, non-native species such as Asian carp, round goby, and zebra mussels threaten the character of the state's waterways as well as the Great Lakes. Efforts to stop the advance of Asian carp toward Lake Michigan and to halt the downstream movement of round goby to major rivers systems — notably the Mississippi River — include intensive monitoring and installation of an electronic barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Indiana

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Indiana State Facts

- The Service employs more than 40 people in Indiana
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Indiana totaled \$2.9 million
- Three National Wildlife Refuges in Indiana total 64,846 acres
- In 2004, more than 94,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Indiana to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

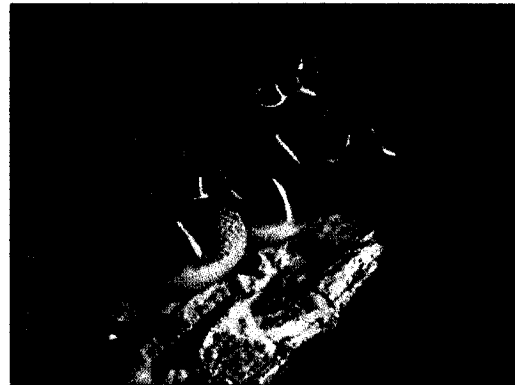
### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

In 2006 Indiana received:

- \$4.7 million for sport fish restoration
- \$4 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

### Indiana Bat Conservation

Conserving the endangered Indiana bat is a high priority for the Service in Indiana. Strides are being made in cooperative efforts, including a Habitat Conservation Plan that allows expansion, development, and highway construction in and around Indianapolis International Airport in areas used by Indiana bats. The HCP calls for permanent preservation of bat habitat along with habitat restoration to ensure the species' continued survival near the airport. The state recently received a Service grant for \$587,250 to begin preliminary work on a statewide Habitat Conservation Plan for the Indiana bat on 10 state forests. The proposed HCP will be the first to address Indiana bat management concerns on actively managed forests, providing a positive model for other states and forest managers.



### Patoka River National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1994, Patoka River NWR in southwest Indiana may someday encompass about 22,000 acres of bottomland hardwoods. At Patoka, the focus is on partnerships to restore habitat and clean up acid mine drainage in area waterways. The refuge works closely with the extremely effective South Fork Citizens' Committee on acid mine drainage issues in the watershed. The group works under the Clean Streams Initiative and its efforts are considered among the most effective in that arena.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Iowa

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Iowa State Facts

- The Service employs more than 67 people in Iowa
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Iowa totaled \$4.4 million
- Seven National Wildlife Refuges and one Wetland Management District in Iowa total 108,000 acres
- In 2004, more than 612,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Iowa to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife
- Boyer Chute National Wildlife Refuge, one of the first Missouri River restoration refuges after the 1993 historic floods, focuses on tallgrass prairie restoration and Missouri River floodplain wetlands restoration.

### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

In 2006 Iowa received:

- \$7 million for sport fish restoration
- \$4 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

### DeSoto's Sunken Treasure

Located in Missouri Valley, Iowa, DeSoto NWR is home to a premier archaeological collection of 200,000 artifacts excavated from the buried hull of the steamboat Bertrand, which sank on the Missouri River in 1865. The wreck was discovered on the refuge in 1968. Visitors can view hundreds of artifacts recovered from the wreck at the refuge visitor center.

### Great Rivers, Restored Prairie Mark Iowa Refuges

Two hundred years ago a vast prairie ecosystem stretched unbroken throughout the Midwestern United States and into Canada. The tallgrass prairie ecosystem encompassed parts of 14 states including nearly all of Iowa.

Deep organic soils formed by the cyclic degradation of prairie roots left a rich legacy to modern agriculture: the most fertile soil in the world. As a result, 99 percent of the original prairie landscape in Iowa succumbed to the plow and other forms of development in a matter of a few decades.



Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, located just west of Des Moines, is working to re-create more than 8,000 acres of Iowa's native tallgrass prairie and oak savanna. Similar prairie restoration efforts are being mounted at the 3,300-acre Union Slough NWR near Algona, in northern Iowa.

The Service also manages McGregor District of the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Driftless NWR and Port Louisa NWR on the Mississippi River in eastern Iowa, and DeSoto NWR along the Missouri River in northwest Iowa.

Located along the Mississippi River Flyway, the Port Louisa and the McGregor District refuges were established to protect migratory birds. Key goals of these refuges are to conserve and enhance the quality and diversity of fish and wildlife and their habitats; and to restore floodplain functions in the river corridor.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Michigan

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Michigan State Facts

- The Service employs 208 people in Michigan
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Michigan totaled \$7 million

#### National Wildlife Refuge Facts

- Seven National Wildlife Refuges and one Wetland Management District in Michigan total 115,028 acres
- In 2004, more than 143,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Michigan to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

#### National Fish Hatchery Facts

- Six National Fish Hatcheries provide lake trout for Michigan's great lakes waters
- Three National Fish Hatcheries in Michigan provide many public opportunities for environmental education

### National Fish Hatcheries

Three National Fish Hatcheries devoted to restoring lake trout to the Great Lakes stocked 3.8 million fish in Lakes Michigan and Huron.

### Sea Lamprey Control Stations

Staff at two Biological Stations work to control sea lamprey populations in the Great Lakes.

### Federal Aid to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

Sport Fish Restoration Act funds were used to develop one of the most extensive "harbors of refuge" programs in the world. The intent of this program is to ensure that, in case of an emergency, no boater is more than 15 shoreline miles from a safe port while boating on the Great Lakes. Funds awarded under the Act have played a major role in helping Michigan construct, expand and upgrade this harbor system.

### Offshore Lake Trout Stocking

The Service has stocked more than 22 million yearling lake trout into lakes Huron and Michigan in the past seven years using the M/V *Togue*, which travels more than 1,000 miles during the months of April, May and June from its home port in Cheboygan, Mich. The *Togue* was built in 1975 as a shrimp trawler and operated for 12 years before being confiscated in Florida by the Coast Guard for carrying contraband. The Service acquired it in 1989 and retrofitted it for stocking lake trout in the Great Lakes. Despite continual maintenance since then, the



*Togue* has deteriorated, and a replacement vessel, the M/V *Spencer F. Baird* (named for the founder of the U.S. Commission of Fish and Fisheries, the predecessor of the Fish and Wildlife Service), is expected to be operational in 2007. The *Baird* has been specifically designed for lake trout stocking and will also have fish assessment capabilities to support hatchery product evaluation programs.

### Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

North America's first international wildlife refuge was established in 2001 and its first Refuge Manager hired in 2003. The refuge has undertaken comprehensive conservation planning, which will conserve, protect and restore habitat for 29 species of waterfowl, 65 kinds of fish and 300 species of migratory birds on more than 5,000 acres along the lower Detroit River in Michigan and Canada. The refuge is a result of an unprecedented partnership of government agencies, businesses, conservation groups, landowners and private citizens on both sides of the border.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Minnesota

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Minnesota State Facts

- The Service employs 441 people in Minnesota, and about half of those are at the Regional Office at Ft. Snelling.
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Minnesota totaled \$40.6 million
- 13 National Wildlife Refuges totaling more than 214,000 acres
- Eight Wetland Management Districts totaling more than 267,000 acres
- In 2004, more than 4.4 million people visited national wildlife refuges and wetland districts in Minnesota to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

- In 2006 Minnesota received:
  - \$12.8 million for sport fish restoration
  - \$7 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

### Waterfowl Production Areas

Incorporated into the refuge system in 1966, nearly 95 percent of waterfowl production areas are located in the prairie wetlands or "potholes" of the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin. If wetlands in this vast prairie pothole region were not saved from drainage, hundreds of species of migratory birds would have been seriously threatened or become extinct.

Although waterfowl production areas, easements, and National Wildlife Refuges account for less than 2 percent of the landscape in the prairie pothole region states, they are responsible for producing nearly 23 percent of this area's waterfowl. That is why working with private landowners through voluntary partnerships to enhance wetlands is so critical to protecting waterfowl.

By law, waterfowl production areas are open to hunting, fishing, and trapping. Other important wildlife-dependent uses include wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education.



### Protecting Endangered Species

The Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office works to conserve and protect the 16 federally listed endangered, threatened or candidate species in Minnesota. Actions to save these species from extinction result in improved water quality, preservation and restoration of natural areas, clean up of contaminants, and restoration of degraded rivers and streams.

The Service leads recovery work for the winged mapleleaf, an endangered species considered to be one of the rarest freshwater mussels in North America. The Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office works with researchers from the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, USGS, the La Crosse Fishery Resource Office, and National Park Service. Recent accomplishments include identifying channel catfish and blue catfish as suitable hosts, undertaking river studies to ensure artificial propagation and reintroduction follows the mussels' natural cycle, and monitoring range expansion of invasive zebra mussels.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Missouri

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Missouri State Facts

- **Employment:** The Service employs more than 84 people in Missouri
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Missouri totaled \$6.5 million
- Ten National Wildlife Refuges in Missouri total more than 60,831 acres
- In 2004, more than 239,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Missouri to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

- In 2006 Missouri received:
  - \$9.6 million for sport fish restoration
  - \$7 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

### Missouri River Endangered Species

The Columbia Field Office helped develop a biological opinion on the impacts of Missouri River dams and navigation operations on endangered and threatened species. The Service provided the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with an assessment of threats to endangered species — including the pallid sturgeon and least tern — and provided recommendations to minimize impacts as river operations continue.

### Conserving Mississippi River Wetlands

The Columbia Field Office continues to provide input to the Corps of Engineers on the impacts of a proposed flood control project along the Mississippi River that would jeopardize the state's last remaining wetland connected to the river. The Service has provided information on expected impacts of the project and alternative ways to accomplish project purposes while conserving irreplaceable wetland habitat for fish and wildlife.



### Bagnell Dam

The Columbia Field Office is participating in a review of the Osage Hydroelectric Relicensing Project, specifically Bagnell Dam, which created Lake of the Ozarks. The office participates in stakeholder meetings and works closely with the Missouri Department of Conservation and others to address the loss of endangered freshwater mussels below the dam.

### Keeping Communication Open

The Columbia Missouri Field Office reviews 300 to 500 cellular communication tower projects each year. The Columbia Office has come up with a streamlined process to review projects so that delays are avoided while impacts to migratory birds are considered. The streamlined process has provided an effective outreach and education tool that is paying off in a noticeable reduction in the number of cell towers posing threats to migratory birds. Feedback indicates communications companies are building more migratory bird friendly cell towers in Missouri as a direct result of Columbia's streamlined review and concurrence process.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Ohio

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Ohio State Facts

- The Service employs 24 people in Ohio
- The Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Ohio totaled \$2.7 million

#### National Wildlife Refuge Facts

- Three National Wildlife Refuges in Ohio total 9,081 acres
- In 2004, more than 268,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Ohio to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

In 2006 Ohio received:

- \$8.4 million for sport fish restoration
- \$6.2 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

Wildlife Restoration Act funds have helped Ohio meet its wildlife management goals through significant land acquisitions. One of these acquisitions is the Tri-Valley Wildlife Area, located in Muskingum County. This 16,200-acre reclaimed strip mine was purchased for \$4.5 million and will provide increased recreational activities for the public and additional habitat for wildlife.

### Threatened Snake Returns to Lake Erie Island

Researchers and biologists in 2002 confirmed that the Lake Erie water snake, a threatened species, has returned to Green Island—the first confirmed sighting in more than 20 years. Managed by the Ohio Division of Wildlife as a wildlife refuge, 17-acre Green Island is one of the limestone islands in western Lake Erie on which water snakes were found in the 1930s and 1940s. Surveys in the 1980s and 1990s found no water snakes, but on a visit to the island this July, researchers from Northern Illinois University and Fish and Wildlife Service employees captured 10 Lake Erie water snakes and implanted them with tracking tags. They also observed nine more snakes that were not captured.



### Ottawa NWR Draws Birds, Visitors, Dollars to Ohio

More than 260,000 visitors flocked to Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in 2004, many of them to see the songbirds, waterfowl and other bird species that use the refuge and the adjacent state-owned Magee Marsh as stopovers during their long migrations. Visitors to the refuge and the marsh, who pump some \$5.6 million into the local economy each year, are rewarded with miles of hiking trails, many of them disabled accessible, and the opportunity to observe and photograph birds on a refuge that was recently named as a “birding hotspot” by Birder’s World magazine. Construction on a new visitors center/office will be completed in 2007.



## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Wisconsin

## *Fish and Wildlife Service Highlights*

### Quick Facts

#### Wisconsin State Facts

- The Service employs 163 people in Wisconsin.
- Fiscal Year 2006 Resource Management budget for Service activities in Wisconsin totaled \$13.5 million

#### National Wildlife Refuge Facts

- Eight National Wildlife Refuges and two Wetland Management Districts in Wisconsin total more than 181,000 acres
- In 2004, more than 800,000 people visited national wildlife refuges in Wisconsin to hunt, fish, participate in interpretive programs and view wildlife

#### Federal Assistance to State Fish and Wildlife Programs

In 2006 Wisconsin received:

- \$9.8 million for sport fish restoration
- \$7.3 million for wildlife restoration and hunter education

### Endangered Cranes Summer at Wisconsin Refuge

Necedah National Wildlife Refuge continues to serve as the summer home for members of the only migrating flock of whooping cranes in the eastern United States. In 2001, a flock made its first migration to Florida's Chassahowitzka NWR, and by September 2004, a fourth group of whoopers had gone south. Cranes are led on their first fall migration by ultralight aircraft. They are raised and trained to follow the ultralights at Necedah NWR and now number over 45 birds.

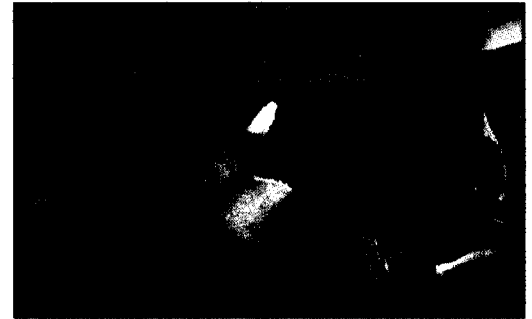
### Protecting Endangered Species

The Green Bay Ecological Services Field Office works to conserve and protect the 19 federally listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species in Wisconsin. Actions to save these species from extinction result in improved water quality, preservation and restoration of natural areas, clean up of contaminants, and restoration of degraded rivers and streams.

### Menominee Indian Tribe Celebrates First Sturgeon Season in More than a Century

The Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources celebrated the first chance for tribal members to harvest lake sturgeon in more than a century.

When two dams were placed downstream on the Wolf River in the 1880s and 1920s, lake sturgeon could no longer move upstream onto the



reservation. To allow for harvest of sturgeon once again on the reservation, the Service has stocked more than 56,000 lake sturgeon into Legend Lake since 1994 to establish a sturgeon fishery. Annual fishery assessments now indicate that there are substantial numbers of lake sturgeon over 40 inches in length to provide a limited fishery season for tribal members.

### Waterfowl Production Areas

Incorporated into the refuge system in 1966, nearly 95 percent of waterfowl production areas (WPA) are located in the prairie wetlands or "potholes" of the Dakotas, Minnesota, Montana and Wisconsin. Staff manage wetland easements, perpetual contracts with willing private landowners who protect their wetlands from draining and filling with soil. In recent years, the Service has also purchased grassland easements to provide permanent grassland cover around wetlands to meet the needs of upland nesting waterfowl and other wildlife.

WPAs are open to hunting, fishing, and trapping. Other important wildlife-dependent uses include wildlife observation, photography, and environmental education.

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**



# News Release

*Midwest Region*

*External Affairs Office*

**Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling, MN 55111-4056  
612/713-5360 Fax: 612/713-5280 <http://midwest.fws.gov>**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2008

EA 08 - 55

For additional information:

See contact information at end of release

## **Fish Disease Found in Ohio Reservoir**

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has confirmed that viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHSv), a virus that causes disease in fish but does not pose any threat to public health, was confirmed present in muskellunge sampled during routine egg collection in Clear Fork Reservoir in late April. The virus was found in ovarian fluid samples collected from the muskellunge as part of routine ODNR testing for VHSv, but has not resulted in a fish kill. The samples were sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Fish Health Center in LaCrosse, WI, where the VHSv virus was initially isolated and then to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory, USDA Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Ames, Iowa, where it was later confirmed.

These results mark the first isolation of VHSv outside the Great Lakes basin. Fisheries officials believe VHSv has been a factor in recent fish kills of several species of fish in the Great Lakes that correspond with the end of spring spawning.

VHSv was first isolated as a virus in 1963, and is presumed responsible for European fish kills as far back as 1938. In 1988, the virus was first detected in marine fishes in the Pacific Northwest. VHSv is a pathogen of international concern and is reportable to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE)

In 2005, VHSv was first reported in the Great Lakes, but may have been responsible for fish kills since 2003. VHSv has been responsible for numerous fish kills in lakes Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Ontario. The virus has also been the cause of fish mortality in several inland lakes in the states of Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin, all within the Great Lakes Basin. As a result, APHIS issued an emergency order in 2006 restricting the interstate movement of live fish of susceptible species from the States and Provinces of the Great Lakes. Many States around the Great Lakes, including Ohio, developed their own emergency orders restricting intrastate movement to protect other watershed within their states. For a list of susceptible species, visit APHIS's website at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/>.

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"One likely possibility is that VHS will act like many other viruses in the environment. Typically, viruses or bacteria infect fish, which may lead to disease in the fish if they are susceptible. Once the disease is expressed in these fish, some percentage of the population will die," said Ray Petering, chief of the DNR Fisheries Division. "Those remaining will survive and will develop immunity to the viruses or bacteria that cause a disease. Since there are no large-scale treatments for VHS that can be applied to fish in the wild, the presence of this new virus may result in spring fish mortalities that are abnormally high for a few years as more fish encounter the virus. These mortalities may abate as fish begin to build immunity to the virus."

Citizens are encouraged to report sick fish or fish kills by calling 1-800-WILDLIFE or use the ODNR Web site at: <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/contactform/tabid/10750/Default.aspx> then from the Topic list select: Wildlife - Fishing & Hunting

Anglers should contact the ODNR if they observe large numbers of fish exhibiting any of the following: hemorrhaging in the skin, including large red patches particularly on the sides and on the head; multiple hemorrhages on the liver, spleen, or intestines; or hemorrhages on the swim bladder that give the otherwise transparent organ a mottled appearance.

This information will help ODNR track VHS and take appropriate actions to slow spread of this virus. Anglers and boaters can help prevent spread of VHS and other viruses or bacteria that cause disease in fish by not transferring fish between water bodies, and thoroughly cleaning boats, trailers, nets, and other equipment when traveling between different lakes and streams.

The use of a contact disinfectant such as a solution of 200 ppm chlorine bleach (5.1 ounces per 10 gallons of water) to clean vessels and live wells is very effective against VHS and other viruses and bacteria that cause disease in fish. Soaking exposed items such as live wells, nets, anchors, and bait buckets in a light disinfectant of 20 ppm chlorine solution (5.1 ounces of liquid household bleach per 100 gallons of water) for 30 minutes is also an effective method to prevent the spread of a wide range of aquatic nuisance species. Routine surveillance, disinfection of eggs used in fish production, public education, and additional VHS research will continue by the ODNR, Ohio Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in an effort to minimize the spread of VHS and protect fish hatcheries.

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