

# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



John G. Rogers, Acting Director  
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## Operation Green Stripe Goes National

Steve Kufirin

The Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Big-Rivers Region has expanded a regional conservation initiative into a national agreement with the Monsanto Company. At the request of Monsanto, this program will be conducted in all of the Service's regions. Partners include **Monsanto**, the Service, the **Future Farmers of America Foundation**, **Pheasants Forever**, and **local agricultural cooperatives**.

The conservation program, known as Operation Green Stripe, was originally conceived by the Monsanto Company to involve Future Farmers of America chapters and farmers-landowners in a cooperative joint venture. It was designed to restore wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality by creating or restoring riparian areas between cropped fields and rivers, streams, ditches, and lakes.

Operation Green Stripe uses a financial and educational incentive to encourage farmers and landowners to voluntarily protect historically altered drainages in the Upper Midwest. Unlike most incentive programs, Operation Green Stripe does not offer direct cash to farmers or landowners. Rather, the program provides a \$100 incentive to Future Farmers of America chapters for each farmer enrolled up to a maximum of five.

The farmers are enrolled as soil and water stewards to plant and maintain a Green Stripe adjacent to a perennial drainage system on their properties for no less than three years. The minimum requirement for a stripe is that it be at least one rod (16.5 feet) wide and 27.5 rods (453.75 feet) long. Seed is provided free of charge through an agreement between Monsanto and the agricultural cooperatives.

To build upon this unique conservation project, the Service increases the funding incentive to Future Farmers of America chapters \$100 per participant for the completion of five additional stripes above those allowed by Monsanto. Pheasants Forever provides technical assistance and seeds. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service and local soil and water conservation districts have also provided technical assistance at the request of some Future Farmers of America chapters.

To date, 56 Green Stripes—an area of approximately 60 acres and a total maximum length of 31 miles—have been taken out of production and planted to grassy buffer stripes in the Great Lakes-Big Rivers Region.



## Florida Receives \$500,000 to Protect Nesting Area of Endangered Sea Turtle

Vicki Boatwright

As part of the first pilot program to help states acquire lands that support habitat conservation plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service has awarded \$500,000 to the State of Florida to protect the nesting habitat of endangered sea turtles. The money awarded to the state will be used by **Volusia County** to augment a habitat conservation plan, approved in November 1996, to increase beach nesting areas for the turtles.

"We are delighted to have been selected for this grant award," said Volusia County Manager **Lawrence Arrington**. "This is a testimonial to the soundness of Volusia County's habitat conservation plan and our efforts to protect the environment. This money will be a tremendous help as we address future off-beach parking needs."

Historically, Volusia County's wide, hard-packed beaches have been used for driving and auto racing. To minimize the number of turtles that might be lost because of beach driving, Volusia County has prohibited vehicular traffic on nine miles of beach most heavily used by nesting sea turtles. With implementation of the plan came criticism that, by eliminating on-beach parking with no firm plans to increase off-beach parking adjacent to closed areas, authorities were unfairly restricting public beach access.

The pilot program, established under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act, provides that money

*Kemp's ridley sea turtle lays eggs, hatchlings head for the surf.*



may be obligated to appropriate state agencies but ensures that the funds are used for specific land acquisitions that support Habitat Conservation Plans where either states or territories are involved as partners. The funds do not supplant private-sector or local government responsibilities required for mitigation during the implementation of Habitat Conservation Plans.

Southeast Regional Director **Noreen Clough** said that by helping Volusia County buy land to develop off-beach parking areas, the Service is, in effect, purchasing beach habitat used by five species of sea turtles for nesting. "Each parking space created will remove a car from the beach, cumulatively reducing impacts of vehicular driving and parking, making the habitat far better for sea turtles," she said.

## S P E C I E S U P D A T E S

### Pelican Die-off at Salton Sea

Fish and Wildlife Service staff at Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge near Calipatria, California, report that about 10 percent of the 4,000 brown and white pelicans currently at Salton Sea are beginning to exhibit symptoms of avian botulism. Brown pelicans are an endangered species.



Refuge staff have begun daily airboat patrols to pick up sick and dead birds, reactivated the refuge bird hospital, and contacted Pacific Wildlife Project to arrange for rehabilitation of sick pelicans. Dead specimens have been sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for necropsy.

### Florida Panther Deaths



Both male Florida panthers released into Big Cypress National Preserve January 30 have died. Male #203 died February 26 in the field while being prepared for emergency transport to medical facilities.

Male #201 died March 11 at White Oak Conservation Center after being taken from the wild the preceding afternoon. Both were experiencing respiratory problems. Based on initial necropsy findings, cause of death was likely hemorrhagic pneumonia. It will be several months before it is known whether either of the animals mated with any of the resident females.

### Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse

The proposed rule to list the Preble's meadow jumping mouse as an endangered species was published in the March 25 Federal Register. The small nocturnal rodent inhabits wet meadows and riparian habitats along the eastern edge of the Colorado Front Range below 7,400 feet in elevation and similar habitats in southeastern Wyoming. Surveys conducted during the past five years have found very few individuals of this subspecies in Wyoming and failed to find it at many historical locations in Colorado. Unprecedented development along the Front Range urban corridor threatens the Preble's meadow jumping mouse.



### Mexican Wolf

The Record of Decision on the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for Reintroduction of the Mexican Wolf Within its Historic Range* has been signed by the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army. The record of decision documents the selection of the preferred alternative in the final environmental impact statement, which calls for reintroduction of Mexican wolves in the Blue Range Recovery Area of Arizona-New Mexico. The White Sands Wolf Recovery Area in New Mexico will be used later as a back-up release site if needed. A final rule designating non-essential experimental population status will be published within the next few months. Wolf releases in eastern Arizona are expected within a year.



# Service Employees, Volunteers Honored

**William C. (Chuck) Hunter, Vernon G. Ricker, Lou Hinds, Jack Jeffrey, Judy Dryja, and Bill Buchanan** received special awards at the 62nd annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources conference held March 14-17 in Washington, D.C.

## Biologist Named Outstanding Leader

**Partners in Flight** presented its 1996 award for leadership to Chuck Hunter, a biologist in the Atlanta Regional office. A number of these prestigious awards are presented each year to individuals who have made significant contributions to the organization's goal of protecting migratory birds and their habitats. Hunter received two separate nominations for the award and was named the only winner in the leadership category.

Well-known for his dedication to the long-term conservation of neotropical migratory birds, Hunter has been the Southeast Regional Coordinator for Partners In Flight since 1995 and is cited as, "... the primary force to get Partners In Flight in the Southeast up and running and to continue its progress in many areas." While he is serving a 3-year detail with the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the State of Georgia Wildlife Resources Division, he continues to work closely with Service personnel.

Hunter credits his success to the strong support he received from his supervisors along with the valuable assistance of his colleagues who represent many agencies, organizations, and universities across the Southeast.

## Maryland Officer Earns Guy Bradley Award

**The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation** honored Vernon Ricker with its Guy Bradley Award as the outstanding conservation law enforcement officer of the year. Ricker, a special agent in Salisbury, Maryland, earned the award for 27 years of dedicated conservation law enforcement. Throughout his career, Ricker has repeatedly risked his life in the line of duty, often pursuing armed poachers alone to make an arrest. He is renowned for his meticulous preparation and high conviction percentage when he appears in court. Established in 1988, the Guy Bradley Award recognizes a conservation law enforcement officer whose dedication to the protection of natural resources has advanced the cause of wildlife conservation. The Foundation gives the award each year in honor of Guy Bradley, an Audubon game warden killed in the line of duty in 1905.

## Employees Receive Kudos

**The National Wildlife Refuge Association and The National Audubon Society** presented Lou Hinds, manager of J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Sanibel, Florida, with the Paul



From left, Acting Service Director John Rogers joins award recipients Vernon Ricker (Guy Bradley Award), Judy Dryja (Volunteer of the Year), Bill Buchanan (Volunteer of the year), Jack Jeffrey (Employee of the Year), and Lou Hinds (Manager of the Year). Photo by Tami Heilemann, ISC

Kroegel Award for dedication and effectiveness as a refuge manager. The award is given annually in honor and memory of the refuge system's first manager, Paul Kroegel, appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to be "protector" of Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Florida in 1903.

Hinds was cited for his effective public outreach programs, natural resources management, and personnel management skills. At Ding Darling Refuge, Hinds has recruited a trained corps of volunteers who guide natural history and birding tours. He has overseen installation of equipment for two radio stations, enabling the refuge to provide interpretive information for drivers along the wildlife trail; introduced guided tram tours of the refuge, which, along with canoe and kayak tours, reduced the number of cars along the wildlife drive; and spearheaded efforts to establish cooperating associations of citizens, or "Friends" groups, at Ding Darling and other refuges.

The two groups also named Jack Jeffrey, a wildlife biologist at Hakalau Forest National Wildlife Refuge in Hilo, Hawaii, Refuge Employee of the Year. Jeffrey received his award for excellence in interpersonal relations and teamwork. Jeffrey is working to establish a "Friends" group at Hakalau and is partly responsible for the refuge's volunteer tree planting and weed control programs. He also gives lectures, briefings, field tours, and slide presentations on a wide variety of topics and lends his own photographs to other Service offices and government agencies for publications and exhibits. His knowledge of native forest birds and bird survey methods makes him a popular speaker in Hawaii. He frequently participates in forest bird surveys as part of the Hawaii Forest Bird Recovery Team.



## Volunteers Honored

**The National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Audubon Society** honored Judy Dryja, a volunteer at Merritt Island refuge in Titusville, Florida, and Bill Buchanan, a volunteer at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as Refuge Volunteers of the Year.

Dryja has volunteered at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge since 1989. She provides interpretive programs to refuge visitors and also off the refuge. Her "Going Wild in Your Backyard" program about attracting wildlife through landscaping has received rave reviews in the local community. Dryja also provides support for the refuge's environmental education program and assists at the visitor information desk in the absence of regular volunteers.

Dryja is also a member of the Merritt Island Wildlife Association Board of Directors, a nonprofit organization promoting awareness of the refuge and providing financial support for its programs. As a member of the local chapter of the National Audubon Society, she helps refuge staff coordinate the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count each year at the John F. Kennedy Space Center.

Buchanan's volunteer work at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge includes writing and photography. A former medical technician now on disability, Buchanan is an independent photojournalist committed to increasing public awareness of all public lands. He has written scores of articles about events and issues at the refuge. These articles, supplemented by his photographs, have been published in newspapers and magazines in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. He also has written extensively about other national wildlife refuges and other Service programs and conducted photography workshops at the refuge.

## Niagara River Corridor Designated North America's First Globally Significant Bird Area



*Fred Caslick, New York Field Office*

Niagara Falls, traditionally a popular honeymoon destination, is now slated to become an equally important destination for eco-tourists and birding enthusiasts. This popular area of thundering water lies within the 37-mile-long Niagara River Corridor linking Lakes Erie and Ontario in the United States and Canada. The corridor was named the first internationally sponsored **Globally Significant Important Bird Area** in North America at a recent ceremony.

The Niagara River Corridor is best known for the unusual diversity and abundance of gulls that feed there as they migrate from their Canadian breeding grounds to their wintering areas in the United States and Mexico. It is especially important for

Bonaparte's gulls. Sightings of 50,000, or 10 percent of the world's population, have been made in a single day. The area also hosts thousands of wintering waterfowl and a great variety of migrating songbirds.

As a major conservation initiative of Birdlife International and the National Audubon Society, the goal of the Important Bird Areas program is to identify and protect a worldwide network of sites necessary to ensure the long-term viability of naturally occurring bird populations. The Canadian Nature Federation, Bird Studies Canada, The Commission for Environmental Cooperation, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Canadian Wildlife Service also participated in this event. **Sherry Morgan**, New York Ecological Services Field Office supervisor, represented the Service.



Cynthia Quarterman, Director  
Suzanne Melancon, Bureau Editor



## Around MMS

Patrick Mulcahey reports from the MMS Denver Compliance Office that Auditor Helene Baker has been accepted as a member of the Association of Government Accountants.

The general trend of retirements and other departures from MMS that began late last year culminated in March with a last-minute flurry of luncheons, parties, and roasts for the many MMS employees who took advantage of the buy-out to end their federal careers.

With the help of Elaine Brock (Alaska), Herta Fondren (MMS's Southern Administrative Service Center), Lenna Gerwing (Denver), and Margie Krom (Headquarters), we have compiled the following list of employees who have recently left MMS. If we neglected anyone, it was inadvertent.

From Alaska: Brian Schoof, Ronald Turner, and Brunhilde O'Brien. From the Southern Administrative Service Area, which includes the Gulf of Mexico area: Theodore Bomba, Donald Giroir, Leona Lajaunie, John Wade, Clifford Kirkpatrick, William Neal, Douglas McIntosh, and Mary Coats.

From Denver: Gail Pagano, Roslin Klockentager, Ann Woolums, Theodore Hodkowski, James Mikelson, Alice Lutz, Gale Lutz, Roy Williams, Linda Bell, Barbara Nather, Erich Gross, James Dawson, Alejandro DeHerrera, Walter Gehrke, Edna Gusdorf-Carmichael, Joyce Mellott, Joseph Bland, Ronald Day, Jack Dresser, Robert Paul, Keith Yahn, Don Jones, Marvin Shaver, George Jee, Joann Golden, Janet Lauback, Philip Wilson, Vesta Schwartz, Henry Loeb, Starr Gee, William Boyer, Shelby Garnham, Beverly Girard, Beulah Jones, Barbara Kelley, Andrei Kibbe, Rose Mary Larimore, Jean Lilley, Jacob Meyer, Norman Pember, Ronald Pennington, Barbara Peterson, Julia Shaw, Lloyd Anderson, Jeanette Ballentine, Michael Bloese, Robert Casey, Christella Cordova, Martha Fancher, Miguel Villarreal, Sammy Wilson, and Rolland Bell.

From Headquarters: Vincent Arostegui, Hank Bartholomew, Francis Certo, Tom DeRocco, Edward Dixon, Edythe Ferguson, Lawrence Hannon, Charles McKinney, Suzanne Melancon, John Pierce, Tony Raspolic, Gerald Rhodes, Mario Rivero-Hernandez, Beverley Sahami, Idell Smith-Harrison, Burton Taubman, and Norm Weaver.



After Sale 166 Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Bob Armstrong, left, answers questions from a cadre of reporters.

## Central Gulf Of Mexico Sale A Record-Breaker

The room was packed, the stage was set, the players were in place, and the sale began with Regional Director **Chris Oynes** welcoming the audience of 800 plus. After Assistant Secretary **Bob Armstrong** added his greetings, Oynes took the stage again, and then he did it.

He donned the red jacket, much to the delight of the crowd. No director had dared to wear a red jacket, the traditional signal for a big sale, during the past dozen years. But it turned out that his confidence was well founded.

Central Gulf Sale 166, held March 5, recorded all time highs in both the number of bids submitted and the number of blocks bid on by oil companies. MMS received 1,790 bids totaling \$1,241,942,374 from 103 companies. Those bids were submitted on 1,032 blocks off the coasts of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

The sum of high bids was \$824,055,489. To put the sale in perspective, this \$824 million in high bids represents four times MMS's entire annual budget nationwide. Another way to look at it is that each of MMS's 2,000 employees, by way of planning, processing, and maintaining Sale 166 leases to be issued, is responsible for \$41,200 going to the U.S. Treasury, just in association with the high bid bonuses from Sale 166.

The economic benefits of this lease sale to coastal residents of the Gulf of Mexico Region are noteworthy. For example, 27 percent of the revenues of this sale generated in the 8(g) zones (the areas 3-6 miles offshore) of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi will be paid directly to those states by MMS.

In bonuses alone, this means that up to \$8.7 million will be paid to the states (the final total being dependent on the result of MMS bid evaluation decisions). Add to that amount, 27 percent of all future revenues such as anticipated royalties associated with Sale 166 leases, as well as the employment value of jobs maintained and generated by this sale, and the widespread economic benefits of this historic sale become truly impressive.

The results of this sale, coupled with last year's two record breaking sales, clearly signal continued growth in the Gulf.



Behind the scenes at Sale 166, MMS employees enter bid data into a new lease sales tracking system.

## Celebrating Black History Month



Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Bernette Johnson receives a commemorative plaque from Gulf of Mexico Regional Director Chris Oynes after her address to MMS employees.

The Gulf of Mexico Regional Office commemorated Black History Month with special activities on February 27. Louisiana Supreme Court Justice **Bernette Johnson** was the keynote speaker. Her talk was based on this year's Black History Month theme: *African Americans and Civil Rights: A Reappraisal*.

Her comments to the crowd of more than 200 regional office employees focused on uniting the local community. She said she hoped people would work together to move forward, instead of looking back, and fighting the same tired old battles. Enthusiastic applause seemed to indicate that the audience agreed.

**Justice Johnson**, elected to the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1994, is the first African American woman to serve on the court. In 1984 she was the first woman elected to the Civil District Court in New Orleans; she was elected Chief Judge of the Civil District Court in 1994.

Justice Johnson's professional achievements and affiliations and community involvement are a testimony to her dedicated public service. She has spent most of her legal career working for the poor and disadvantaged.

# MMS, Cherokee Nation Begin Mineral Royalty Training Program

MMS Director **Cynthia Quarterman** and Cherokee Nation Councilman **Chuck Hoskin** have launched a special training program designed exclusively for Indian tribes with mineral resources. The signing ceremony took place on February 20.

Through an Intergovernmental Personnel Act Agreement, Cherokee Nation employee **Jeri Elliott** became the first participant in the Royalty Internship Program, where she's learning first-hand how MMS collects, accounts for, and distributes mineral royalties for Indian tribes.

The Royalty Internship Program is designed to help Indian tribes better understand the processes MMS uses to provide them with the revenues associated with mineral leases on their lands.

While it will be good for any mineral-producing tribe to learn more about MMS's royalty management functions and activities, it will be especially helpful for mineral-producing tribes considering self-governance or self-determination contracts. "MMS is committed to providing tribes with greater opportunities for managing or monitoring their own affairs regarding mineral revenues," said Director Quarterman. "It's not only the law, it's good business."

Until the advent of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, responsibility for overseeing mineral revenue activities was shared by the MMS and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribes may now choose to manage their own mineral royalties.

The Royalty Internship Program offers training in all of the program's royalty and production accounting operations, including lease, agreement, well, and payor data bases; payment application and revenue distribution; debt collection, appeals, and enforcement; royalty valuation; exception resolution; Indian outreach and royalty assistance; and payor and reporter training.

Previously, only employees of tribes with Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act audit agreements could be trained by MMS in mineral valuation and audit methods.



*MMS Director Cynthia Quarterman and Cherokee Nation Councilman Chuck Hoskin at signing ceremony for the special training program.*



*From left, Data Management Analyst Sinda Scroggs, Program Analyst Bill Douglas, royalty intern Jeri Elliott, and Data Management Analyst Andy Sandoval worked closely during the first two weeks of the royalty internship program.*

Now, from an inventory of Royalty Management Program functions, participating tribes can develop a specific training plan. While most of the work will be in the form of hands-on work assignments, some classroom training and meeting observations may also be involved. Ultimately, a tribal intern should be able to work independently after returning to the tribe.

Intern Jeri Elliott, a Minerals Technician for the Cherokee Nation's Real Estate Services office, is involved with distribution of royalty payments to individual Cherokee mineral owners. She is scheduled to spend several months, alternating two-week periods between MMS offices in Denver,

Colorado, and her job in Oklahoma. In her first two-week session, she learned how to set up reference data bases using information from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and royalty payors.

Elliott said she is impressed with the Royalty Management Program's reference data operation and is eager to experience other aspects of royalty management work. "We are delighted to have Jeri Elliott as our first intern," said **Bill Douglas**, who is coordinating the training program. "She truly appreciates this opportunity for herself and her tribe."

## Alaska OCS Judges Science Fair

On March 19 judges from MMS arrived at Campbell Elementary School in Anchorage, Alaska, to judge the annual science fair. To their surprise, they were greeted with 152 entries. This year's projects ranged from a home-made fire alarm to a night light for hamsters. Volcanoes were very popular this year, with vinegar eruptions occurring regularly throughout the day.

By the end of the day, 72 students had been recognized for outstanding projects. First, second, and third place prizes, as well as honorable mentions, were awarded for each grade level. Judges then selected the best exhibit, best family project, best abstract or report, and the best of fair. Campbell Elementary School science fair winners for 1997 are as follows:

**Kindergarten:** First Place, Alison Faulk (the Solar System); Second Place, Tristian Michaels (Glaciers); Third Place, Andrea Nutty (Exercise); Honorable Mention, Ethan Harlan and J.V. Bergamaschi.

**First Grade:** First Place, Corby Garrick (Marble Sorter); Second Place, Andrea Morrow (Apples and Color); Third Place, Ashley Noonan (Birds and Bird Feeders); Honorable Mention, Hyun Jin Park, Ivy Cerdana, Geoffry Brewer, and Taryn Bergamaschi.

**Second Grade:** First Place, Samantha Sitton, Julie Wassman, and Julia Bennett (Fish and Volcanos); Second Place Meghan Pinchbeck (Fire Alarm); Third Place, Lindsay Underwood (Fossils); Honorable Mention Arnold Harder.

**Third Grade:** First Place, Jennifer Flannagan (Volcanos); Second Place Shadi Obedi (Static Electricity); Third Place, Jennifer Trimpay (Solar System); Honorable Mention, Rebecca Street, Christi Flannagan, Adam Bryant, Sterling Speight, Ben Bates, and Nate Bates.

**Fourth Grade:** First Place, Erica Ferguson (How Airplanes Fly); Second Place, Anishia Pedroza, Ashley Coates, Whitney Carvalho (Horses); Third Place, Amber Jenkins (Volcanos); Honorable Mention, Kenny Test, Jordan Michaels, Matthew Martone, Michael Martone, Joshua Branstetter, Joseph Arns, Chris Hestes, Kayla King, Heather Reeves, Richard Regacho, Jermaine Jackson, and Jonathon Afatia.

**Fifth Grade:** First Place, Caitlin Burr (Wiggle and Flare); Second Place, David Cacy (Is the World Truly Upside-Down?); Third Place, Kim Kofoid (Air Freshener Test); Honorable Mention, Kimberly Slifer, Rachel Smart, and Michael Simms.

**Sixth Grade:** First Place, Chris Castle and Ashley Castle (Hamster Night Light); Second Place,

Christina Masalunga (Acid Rain); Third Place, Melissa Grieve (Seed Germination); Honorable Mention, Ray Reeves, Jay Bartko, Caloe Cornwall, Eric Volz, B.J. Aafedi, Aaron Dinger, Ward Blair, John Talbot, Luke Adams, Gilbert Repose, Jr., Tiffany Burzinski, Sarah Duff, Jasmine Withrow, Jonathon Branstetter, Samantha Lewis, Eric Carpenter, Erin Agre, and Brandon Benedict.

**Best Exhibit:** Acid Rain by Christina Masalunga; **Best Family Project:** Lungs by Eric Volz; **Best Abstract or Report:** Hamster Night Light by Chris Castle and Ashley Castle; **Best of Fair:** Wiggle and Flare by Caitlin Burr.

MMS's Alaska Region has been involved in a School-Business Partnership with Campbell Elementary School since 1993.

The School-Business Partnership program is sponsored by the Anchorage Borough School District and the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce. Each year, in cooperation with the Campbell Elementary PTA, MMS sponsors the annual science fair and provides judges. The goal of the fair is to improve young peoples' understanding of science and its importance in their daily lives.