

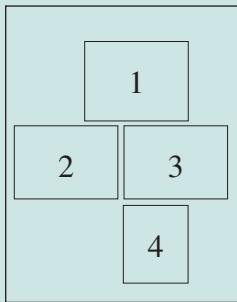


# Friends and Volunteers Annual Report FY 2005

## *How People Are Making a Difference*



*Cover photo credits:*



- 1: Volunteers at Lee Metcalf NWR (Montana) helped visitors during the refuge's first "Bio Thon," held in conjunction with the dedication of its new office and visitor center. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)
- 2: Montana Audubon Society volunteers teach local school children about resident and migratory bird life in the Bitterroot Valley. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)
- 3: Volunteers help run the bookstore at D.C. Booth National Fish Hatchery. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)
- 4: The Volunteer Program regularly yields talented volunteers who help on building projects that refuges and hatcheries could not complete on their own. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

## Federal Legislation Authorizes Volunteers



*From scouts to children in home school programs, students experience environmental education programs that are often conducted by volunteers and Friends organizations. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, as amended by the Fish and Wildlife Improvement Act of 1978, and the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act of 1988 authorize the Fish and Wildlife Service to accept volunteer services.

When the National Wildlife Refuge System Volunteer and Community Partnership Enhancement Act was reauthorized in October of 2004, Congress reaffirmed its interest and provided tools to help the Fish and Wildlife Service involve the American people as stewards of our nation's wildlife. This important law has enabled the Refuge System to expand its volunteer program, encourage environmental education, and significantly develop and increase our community based partnerships with Friends organizations.

Visit our web site at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) or call 1-800-344-WILD. Specific volunteer opportunities are posted at [www.volunteer.gov/gov](http://www.volunteer.gov/gov). You may also contact the regional volunteer/Friends coordinator in your area or the national headquarters.



*Special programs for home-schooled children are sometimes conducted by volunteers at Lee Metcalf NWR (Montana). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

# Introduction

Volunteers, Friends organizations, and other partners are essential allies for many programs within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Day by day, these devoted individuals and organizations play vital roles in helping the Service fulfill its mission and many important goals.

This annual report showcases some of our volunteers' impressive contributions. It also highlights special partnerships involving Take Pride in America, National Public Lands Day, the Student Conservation Association, the Boy Scouts of America, and the Girl Scouts of the United States of America.

Each year, volunteers and Friends generously give time, expertise, and resources to the National Wildlife Refuge System, fish hatcheries, and other Fish and Wildlife Service offices. They play an important role in helping to serve the nearly 40 million visitors who enjoy our lands each year.

Volunteer assistance is significant. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2005, close to 38,000 volunteers donated more than 1.4 million hours. The value of their labor was more than \$25 million. This express of support has a value that is impossible to calculate. In FY 2005, nine new Friends organizations were established, bringing the total of Friends organizations that support refuge programs to over 200.

## Volunteer Program Statistics

Fiscal Year	Number of Volunteers	Hours Donated	Value	Dollar Value
1982	4,251	128,440	\$8.60	\$1,104,584
1983	8,638	479,319	\$8.98	\$4,304,285
1984	11,447	527,150	\$9.32	\$4,913,038
1985	9,103	441,820	\$9.60	\$4,241,472
1986	7,892	386,934	\$9.81	\$3,795,823
1987	8,891	383,983	\$10.06	\$3,862,869
1988	12,416	478,568	\$10.39	\$4,972,322
1989	9,036	575,695	\$10.82	\$6,229,020
1990	14,382	713,441	\$11.41	\$8,140,362
1991	16,895	768,820	\$11.76	\$9,041,323
1992	18,103	968,401	\$12.05	\$11,669,232
1993	19,460	993,681	\$12.35	\$12,271,960
1994	21,186	880,999	\$12.68	\$11,171,067
1995	23,034	909,072	\$13.05	\$11,863,390
1996	25,840	1,108,208	\$13.47	\$14,927,562
1997	29,734	1,335,738	\$13.99	\$18,686,975
1998	28,780	1,505,222	\$14.56	\$21,916,032
1999	28,757	1,277,207	\$15.09	\$19,273,054
2000	35,684	1,332,875	\$15.68	\$20,899,480
2001	36,006	1,462,599	\$16.27	\$23,796,486
2002	39,534	1,352,952	\$16.74	\$22,648,416
2003	44,126	1,628,650	\$17.19	\$27,996,494
2004	37,958	1,532,133	\$17.55	\$26,888,934
2005	37,996	1,478,797	\$17.55	\$25,950,888



Visitors leave their vehicles behind so they can observe and learn about ducks, geese, and swans of the Bitterroot Valley, Montana. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Volunteers help remove unwanted fencing at Lee Metcalf NWR, Montana. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

# Volunteer Highlights



Volunteers worked 460 hours to help remove more than 4,000 artifacts from the archeological site at historic Fort Ruby, located on Ruby Lake NWR (Nevada). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

## Who Are Our Volunteers?

Our volunteers are individuals who want to give back to their communities—parents who want to be good stewards of the land and set examples for their children; retired people who are willing to share a wealth of knowledge and experience; passionate people who enjoy the outdoors and want to spread the word about America's great natural treasures; and concerned citizens of all ages who want to learn more about conservation and make a meaningful contribution.



Children collect waterbugs and learn about fishery resources from volunteers at D. C. Booth NFH (South Dakota). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

## How Volunteers Help

Volunteers	37,996
Hours Donated	1,478,797
Hourly Value*	\$17.55
Dollar Value	\$25,950,888
Full-time Equivalent**	711
Friends Organizations	200
New Friends	9

\* Hourly Value = the current dollar value for an hour's labor

\*\* Full-time Equivalent = number of full-time employees that it would require to complete this donated work

## Volunteer Hours by Activity

Region	Wildlife & Habitat	Environmental Education	Recreation (Other than RR)	Maintenance	Cultural Resources	Other
*CNO	81,295	22,872	12,110	8,479	498	1,843
1	83,777	21,873	52,094	19,480	5,964	12,552
2	72,785	39,999	54,071	77,687	1,758	33,318
3	66,754	15,144	54,589	26,267	2,140	26,113
4	101,108	51,647	60,874	66,406	5,703	37,885
5	88,243	35,809	48,165	34,015	1,706	27,901
6	50,494	10,219	24,528	22,209	10,461	8,355
7	39,020	5,744	13,878	4,606	1,756	4,333
9	626	778	717	0	1,390	4,142
Total	584,102	204,085	321,026	259,149	31,376	156,242

\* CNO = California Nevada Office



Volunteers at Ridgefield NWR (Washington) worked together to solve construction challenges of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

## Volunteer of the Year



### Protecting Our History

Volunteers at **Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge** (Nevada) supported the “Fort Ruby Passport in Time” project, a joint venture on the Refuge with the U.S. Forest Service. The project included the archaeological excavation of the historic Fort Ruby site in August 2005. The goal was to identify the location of the fort’s Officer housing. Not only did they find remains of the housing site, the volunteers also found a privy, a line of fence posts, several charcoal-stained pit features, and many artifacts related to the fort’s occupation of the area from 1862 to 1869. Completion of the project required 460 volunteer hours. The group included six Passport in Time volunteers, the Refuge’s Youth Conservation Corps, and several volunteers from the local community. The excavation yielded a collection of more than 4,000 artifacts.

For thousands of years, the Chinookian Indian culture prospered along the Lower Columbia River. More than 100 volunteers at **Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge** (Washington) contributed over 3,500 hours to construct a replica of a Cathlapotle Plankhouse that will serve as an active connection between the 21st century and the Chinookan Indian society of long ago. This replica is directly linked to the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Expedition, which visited the Chinookan town of Cathlapotle (now located on the Refuge) nearly 200 years ago. Volunteers hand-split and peeled every cedar log used in the structure’s wall planks. When the project was completed, the volunteers weren’t done. A volunteer-run docent training program provided more than 50 prepared volunteers to greet the public and provide interpretation and education at the plankhouse.



A crew of three volunteers positions a cedar plank for the Cathlapotle Plankhouse at Ridgefield NWR (Washington). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

*Tim Anderson, Seal Beach NWR (California) is recognized as our “National Volunteer of the Year.” (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services)*

The Fish and Wildlife Service is fortunate to have many outstanding volunteers, so it is always challenging to choose just one to recognize. This time, the National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation selected **Tim Anderson at Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge** (California) as the “National Volunteer of the Year.”

Tim Anderson is known for his many talents—artist, naturalist, birder, boat builder, fisherman, and above all, a volunteer dedicated to the stewardship of Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge. Since 1996, Mr. Anderson has volunteered over 10,000 hours of service in a myriad of ways.

Through the Refuge’s outreach and education programs, he has shared conservation messages with visitors and others interacting with the Refuge. He has been instrumental in finding innovative ways to bring the Refuge and community together, while respecting the wildlife management needs and security requirements of the only National Wildlife Refuge completely enclosed within a naval weapons station.

On National Public Lands Day 2005, Mr. Anderson facilitated the efforts of more than 350 volunteers who worked to improve and enhance the Refuge’s native habitat by removing invasive species, collecting trash, and planting native flowers, shrubs, and grasses.

When faced with the challenges of the Refuge’s limited visitor use due to its location within the Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station, Mr. Anderson decided to take the Refuge to the people. To help celebrate the Refuge System’s 100th birthday in 2003, he spearheaded development of a mobile “Pelican Van” to deliver environmental education messages to many refuges along the Pacific Flyway. The Pelican Van continues to carry a conservation message to thousands of people each year by visiting schools, libraries, museums and other events. In 2005, Mr. Anderson and the Friends organization presented Refuge programs to more than 6,500 students at the Children’s Water Education Festival and helped educate a range of other special events.



*At Dale Hollow NFH (Tennessee), scouts help with trout stocking chores. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

**Monarchs are tagged each year  
to assist with research associated  
with the University of Kansas'  
Monarch Watch program.**



*Monarch butterflies. (Photo Allen Montgomery)*



*At D.C. Booth NFH (South Dakota) and other hatcheries and refuges across the nation, volunteers work in winter cold and summer heat to help complete vital projects. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

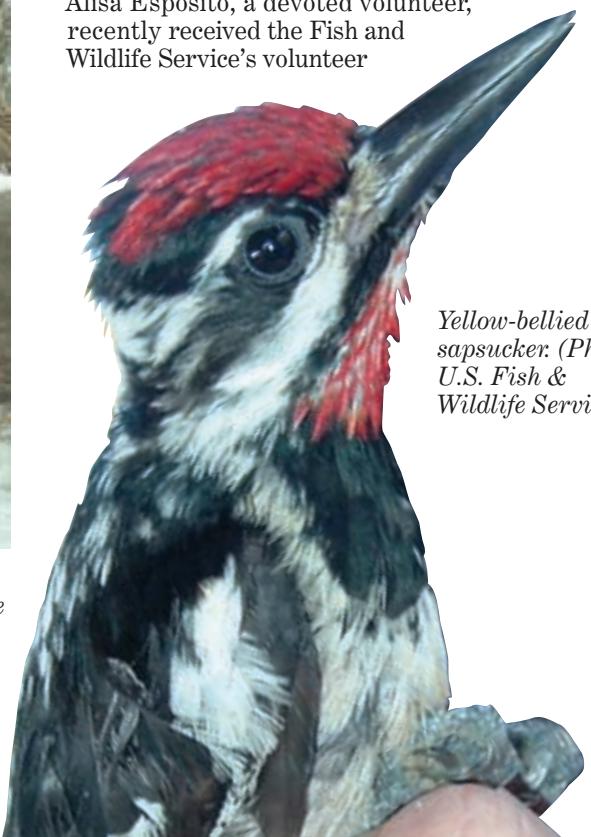
### **Improving Habitat for Wildlife**

At the 16th annual Rio Reforestation Day, hundreds of volunteers joined Fish and Wildlife Service staff to plant 20,000 seedlings on 42 acres of the **Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge** (Texas). All of the seedlings are native plants that will provide food, habitat, and cover for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife that reside at or migrate through this important southern refuge. Since 1994, their contributions have been significant: Rio Reforestation Day volunteers have planted 131,942 native seedlings on 552 acres.

One of the major volunteer projects at the **Green Bay Fisheries Resource Office** (Michigan) involved recruiting and training commercial fishermen to help survey lake sturgeon. The participants collected data and samples from lake sturgeon they incidentally caught while commercial fishing on Lake Michigan and Green Bay. Their efforts yielded samples and data for 317 individual fish. This information is critically important in determining the abundance and distribution of several different spawning populations of lake sturgeon that contribute to the overall, mixed population in these waters. Volunteer fisherman also assisted with spring surveys of lake trout and summer surveys of adult lake sturgeon.

Purple martins have found some valuable allies in North Carolina. Volunteers at the **Asheville Migratory Bird Office** coordinated field monitoring of purple martin mortality associated with motor vehicles using the Umstead Bridge on Roanoke Island. They also inaugurated a Purple Martin Festival to increase awareness of their mortality on Roanoke Island.

Alisa Esposito, a devoted volunteer, recently received the Fish and Wildlife Service's volunteer



*Yellow-bellied sapsucker. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

service award from the Atlanta Regional Director for her work in managing this program and working with the Purple Martin Conservation partnership to find solutions to this problem.

Even small, velvet-winged travelers are monitored by our volunteers. Volunteers at the **Crab Orchard NWR** (Illinois) assisted in capturing and tagging migratory monarch butterflies on September 17, 2005, during the Refuge's Fourth Annual Butterfly Roundup. Volunteers from age two to 62 netted butterflies. Each volunteer was armed with a butterfly net and heard a brief interpretive program explaining the butterfly's life cycle and migration route. After an hour-and-a-half of slowly stalking these delicate creatures, our intrepid helpers captured almost 200 butterflies and temporarily stored them in a "bug dorm" until they could be processed. Monarchs are tagged each year to assist with an ongoing research project associated with the University of Kansas' Monarch Watch program.

Volunteers provided valuable assistance through the **East Lansing Field Office** (Michigan) to monitor and protect the federally endangered Great Lakes piping plover. They also assisted in outreach and education efforts focused on recreational beach users and, in some cases, private landowners. Additionally, volunteers provided assistance in Marquette County with a census of Kirtland's warblers, one of the nation's most endangered songbirds. Without this volunteer assistance, a large portion of northern Marquette County would not have been surveyed during 2005.



*Volunteers help build boardwalk at Okefenokee NWR (Florida).  
(Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

### Value of Volunteers by Region

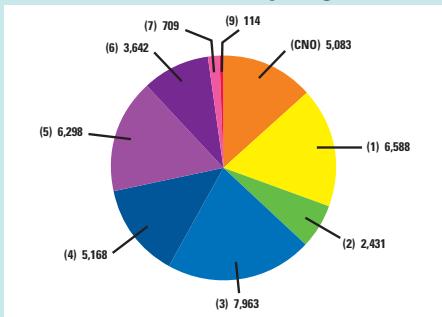
Region	Volunteers	Hours	*Value
**CNO	5,083	127,165	\$2,231,746
1	6,588	197,553	\$3,467,055
2	2,431	239,162	\$4,197,293
3	7,963	202,118	\$3,547,171
4	5,168	306,030	\$5,370,827
5	6,298	243,584	\$4,272,899
6	3,642	86,197	\$1,512,757
7	709	69,336	\$1,216,847
#9	114	7,652	\$134,293
Total	37,995	1,478,797	\$25,950,888

\* Note: volunteer values based on \$17.55/hour.

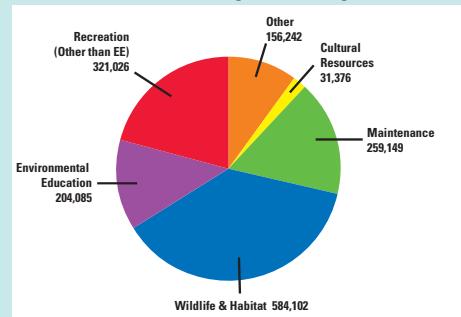
\*\* California Nevada Office

# Region 9 is the Washington D.C. office

### Volunteer Numbers By Regions



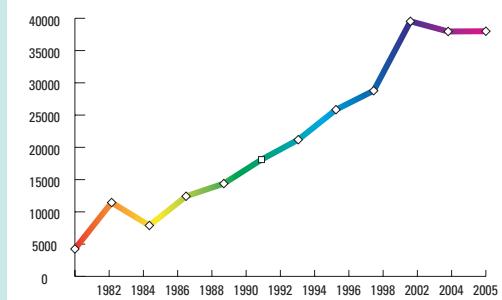
### Volunteer Hours by Activity



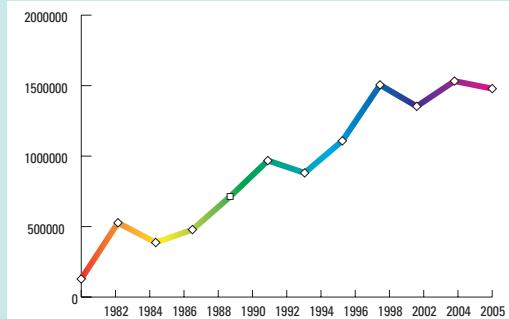
*Estuarine habitats at Rachel Carson NWR (Maine) are home to endangered piping plovers and other water-associated birds that are monitored with assistance from volunteers. (Photo John and Karen Hollingsworth)*



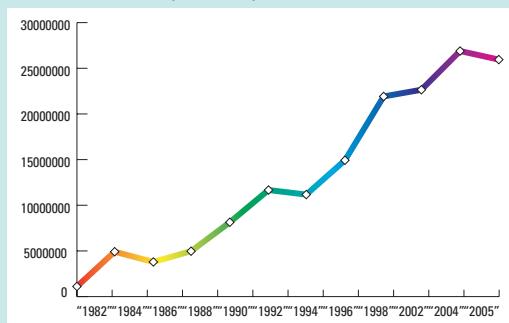
**Number of Volunteers (in thousands)**



**Hours Donated (in millions)**



**Dollar Value (in millions)**



Cottontail rabbits and nesting birds both benefited from a Maine restoration effort. On September 30 and October 1, 2005, the staff of **Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge** (Maine) and more than 20 volunteers began a five-acre shrubland restoration project for New England cottontail and shrubland nesting birds. More than 800 shrubs and small trees were planted in an old field on the Spurwink River Division of the Refuge. The resulting habitat will provide a travel corridor between two other thicket areas that will be used by cottontails and shrub-dependent bird species.

Sometimes a single volunteer can make a difference. Kezia Manlove, an undergraduate mathematics major at St. Olaf College in Minnesota, spent the summer volunteering at **Izembek National Wildlife Refuge** (Alaska). Ms. Manlove logged in 360 hours helping refuge biologists compile 18 years of tundra swan banding data for analysis. Her contribution will help advance the Refuge's understanding of tundra swan population dynamics and migratory trends.

### **Delivering Quality Recreation and Education Programs**

Those with mobility challenges can now enjoy stunning views of Arizona's Colorado River Valley. Refuge volunteers at **Imperial National Wildlife Refuge** (Arizona) contributed more than 500 hours to build a wheelchair-accessible observation tower near the Refuge's visitor center. Don Chapman, a Refuge volunteer, served as the project's foreman. The new tower has four ramps that lead to a 16 foot by 24 foot platform that stands 12 feet above the ground, yielding excellent views of the area.

At **San Bernard National Wildlife Refuge** (Texas), volunteers constructed a new 800 foot boardwalk, observation platform, and covered deck on the



*Refuge volunteers at Imperial National Wildlife Refuge (Arizona) contributed more than 500 hours to build a wheelchair-accessible observation tower near the Refuge's visitor center. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

Discovery Outpost at Hudson Woods. Volunteers also swung hammers to build an observation deck at the Refuge's Moccasin Pond.

Volunteer Del Hall, who works at the **Hagerman National Wildlife Refuge** (Texas), conducted a four-part birding education class on consecutive Saturday mornings in the Refuge's new audio-visual classroom. These free classes covered a wide array of subjects, including how to use field guides and optics, information about bird migration, and advice regarding birding hotspots in Texas. Those who attended the final Saturday class were treated to a guided Refuge tour that provided views of remote habitats that were normally closed to the public.

At **McNary National Wildlife Refuge** (Washington), close to 600 volunteers donate up to 10,000 hours each year in order to help with a wide range of Refuge activities. Some of these dedicated volunteers work on the Refuge with third and sixth grade students who predominantly come from a rural farming community with a large Hispanic population. The children experience a variety of hands-on and inquiry-based activities on the Refuge, which are followed up in the classroom with related science, math, writing, and art activities.



Home-schooled children in the Bitterroot Valley from kindergarten through twelfth grade visit 20 education stations and experience hands-on activities, guided by volunteers. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

*Above and Below:*  
Whether it's planting flowers or tending fish, close to 38,000 volunteers donated 1.4 million hours to support U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service projects. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

*Refuges and hatcheries often rely on historical reenactment volunteers to help convey history and enrich annual events.* (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



*Volunteers across the nation serve as judges during the annual Junior Duck Stamp competition.* (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



*Sea ice at Arctic NWR (Alaska).* (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

### Maintaining Facilities and Property

In some places, volunteers make all of the difference. **Leadville National Fish Hatchery** (Colorado) has a staff of just three. The Hatchery heavily relies on volunteers for custodial and grounds maintenance, to greet visitors, and especially, to complete general maintenance projects. During 2005, volunteers repaired, repainted and stained Hatchery highway signs; constructed trail signs; painted the outside of the office and its porch railings, above ground fuel tanks, an employee residence, and two garages; constructed a walkway over a wet area on the nature trail; built a wheelchair-accessible ramp for the office; and repaired the Hatchery's dump truck. They also put aside their tools to help host the Fish Hatchery 5K Race and Kid's Fishing Day and to staff an aid station for the Leadville Trail 100 Race.

The North Slope of Alaska's Brooks Range on the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge** (Alaska), can be a challenging place to work. Thanks to Refuge staff and volunteers, a one-room administrative cabin with no electricity or water has become a three-bedroom cabin with new comforts. Staff and volunteers remodeled the cabin interior, replacing the propane stove and crude kitchen shelving. They also added a 600-watt solar and a 400-watt wind electric generation system with ample battery storage to provide an independent, renewable source of power through a 2500-watt inverter. The new system will run a small refrigerator, stove, microwave oven, cabin lights, and battery charger for satellite phones and other necessary equipment.

### Other

Some of our volunteers bring professional-level skills. Volunteer Bruce Taylor is in his fifteenth year of volunteering at the **Fish and Wildlife Service's Clark R. Bavin National Forensics Laboratory** (Oregon). He has accumulated over 8,100 hours, all in the genetics area. His current project is to assist forensics scientists who are cataloging wolves. He helps analyze their DNA and identify their home range and specific populations in order to establish evaluation standards.

Help has been offered in the international arena, too. Four Russian volunteers worked with our Headquarters' **Office of International Affairs** (Virginia) to translate several Service brochures and information bulletins into Russian. Then the volunteers helped prepare materials in Russian for the annual United States-Russia Joint Committee meeting on Area 5 of the Bilateral Environmental Agreement. The four also translated the program and proceedings of the United States-Russia Botanical Conference held in September 2005 in Pennsylvania for the 78 participants who attended.



*At some locations, volunteers provide highly technical assistance and use the experience as part of formal college training programs.* (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

# Friends Highlights

## What are Friends Organizations?

Friends are private, independent, community-based, not-for profit organizations formed primarily by citizen volunteers who support the mission and purposes of a National Wildlife Refuge or other Fish and Wildlife Service offices.

## Why are Friends Organizations Important?

Friends organizations provide vital support and services to the Fish and Wildlife Service. These important allies advocate for their refuge or site by providing information to the local community and elected officials, encouraging community participation in programs, and building long-term support. They raise funds and provide volunteer staff for conservation work that might otherwise go undone. They assist with education programs and special events. Friends provide an essential link to the community to promote land stewardship. They contribute and leverage time, expertise, and resources for the benefit of wildlife conservation. Every year the number of Friends organizations supporting the Service continues to grow.



The Friends of Great Swamp NWR (New Jersey) were honored as our "Friends Organization of the Year." (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

## Friends Organization of the Year

Each year, the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) recognize the efforts of an exemplary Friends organization. Their most recent selection for "Friends Organization of the Year" was the **Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge** (New Jersey). This hardworking organization serves the 7,600-acre Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, located just 26 miles from Manhattan's Times Square.

Since 1999, the Friends of Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to public outreach and environmental education in support of this popular urban refuge receiving more than 250,000 visits each year. Their extensive education and outreach program for schools includes Swamp in a Box, an outreach tool that they researched, developed, and produced. This loanable curriculum supplement in a container includes videos, identification guides, grade-specific activities, brochures, event calendars, and more. The Friends also developed the Discovery Den, an activity and display room that helps children learn about the refuge and swamp through interactive games and puzzles, hands-on crafts, and seasonally-themed displays that change monthly.

Through their labor, the Friends of Great Swamp have been able to expand seasonal staffing at the Refuge's wildlife observation center to include Fridays, as well as the weekends. They operate the Refuge Bookstore and Gift Shop and provide other visitor services on the weekends, when the Refuge Headquarters is closed.

Their support is offered in many other ways. The Friends host at least two education programs for the public each month on the Refuge and partner on events sponsored by other conservation organizations in the surrounding Great Swamp Watershed. They also help conduct annual Refuge cleanups, remove invasive species, clean wood duck and bluebird nest boxes, maintain trails and other structures, and perform field surveys.



Veneasa Melton, a Student Conservation Association intern, holds a Canada goose gosling at Audubon NWR (North Dakota), where she assisted with surveys, weed control, and other management tasks. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Volunteers pour and finish a cement walkway at Lee Metcalf NWR (Montana). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

*Volunteers help survey bald eagles at Reelfoot NWR (Tennessee).  
(Photo David Haggard)*



## **Grants Help Our Friends**

### **National Wildlife Refuge System Friends Grant Program**

More than 30 Friends organizations across the country received more than \$142,000 in grants under the **2005 National Wildlife Refuge Friends Grant Program**. This one-of-a-kind grant program is funded by the National Wildlife Refuge System and administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its partners. These grants provide funding to start Friends organization, expand capacity building, and underwrite program activities. The 2005 program focused on proposals that facilitate priority wildlife-dependent recreation on refuges and reach new audiences.

For example, the **Friends of Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge** (New Mexico) received a grant to develop and deliver an eight week hands-on educational program for middle school students. The program combines in-the-classroom and on-the-refuge activities to help students learn about the Rio Grande Watershed on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge.

The **West Volusia Audubon Society** (Florida) received a grant to construct an observation viewing platform and boardwalk that extends over Spring Garden Lake at Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge. The project will provide opportunities for bank fishing on the lake and enhance Refuge education activities.

The **Friends of West Tennessee National Wildlife Refuges** (Tennessee) received a grant to develop a wheelchair accessible interpretive trail on Grassy Island at Reelfoot National Wildlife Refuge. Project activities include the installation of interpretive signage and a kiosk providing visitors with information about the Refuge's bottomland hardwood forests.

*Avid birders gather at national wildlife refuges to view annual bird migrations, where volunteer docents frequently enrich the experience with natural history information and local lore. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

**More than 30 Friends organizations received**

**more than \$142,000 in grants under the 2005**

### **NWR Friends Grant Program.**

#### **Invasive Species Grant Initiative**

Through the Fish and Wildlife Service's **Invasive Species Grant Initiative**, Friends and volunteers help control invasive species on refuges as part of an integrated management approach. The initiative helps expand citizen participation while supporting early detection of newly invading populations and controlling established infestations.

In FY 2005, refuges and Friends organizations submitted project applications and 56 were selected through a competitive selection process. The Fish and Wildlife Service partnered with the Nature Conservancy, U.S. Geological Survey, and National Wildlife Refuge Association to engage Friends organizations in fighting invasive species. As a result, 876 volunteers participated in the treatment, inventory, and restoration of 72,931 acres on refuges.

For example, **Lee Metcalf National Wildlife Refuge** (Montana) received funding to support a wildlife weed pull that drew 75 volunteers from

local organizations and resulted in the treatment and inventory of 16 acres. The Refuge has a 160-acre wildlife viewing area which is open to the public, but contains infestations of spotted knapweed, hounds-tongue, and tansy. With over 150,000 visitors to the Refuge each year, there is great potential for the seeds of these noxious weeds to spread within and outside of the Refuge. To combat this problem, the Refuge decided to organize a fun workday in a high use area and invite local community groups to pull the troublesome weeds.

After registration, the Refuge and volunteers offered an education session showing which weeds to pull, the impact of weeds on native ecosystems, and how each person could play a role in preventing the spread of noxious weeds. The overall goal of the session was to let participants know what they can do to prevent the spread of noxious weeds on the Refuge, in their neighborhoods, and in other recreation areas. There are future plans to expand the project to another high-use trail in a different part of the Refuge.



*Student volunteers with excess energy will get a workout pulling weeds and learn about habitat management in the process. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*



*Visitors at Reelfoot NWR (Tennessee) take a tour with refuge staff and docents. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

#### **Improving Wildlife and Habitat**

Staff of the Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District, volunteers from the **Friends of Detroit Lakes Wetland Management District** (Minnesota), Concordia College, and the Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge Youth Conservation Corps crew joined forces to restore an oak savannah on the Nelson Waterfowl Production Area. Volunteers cut and removed invading trees and brush to restore the openness of the historic oak savannah understory to make it more accessible to wildlife. The area was then hand seeded with native prairie plants in an attempt to restore the natural plant community.

In July 2005, eleven-year old Robert Bennington and nearly 20 other volunteers at **Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge** (Maryland) identified locations of invasive plants by plugging data about their growth and location into a global position mapping system. This will help the Refuge staff to track progress in controlling invasive plants.



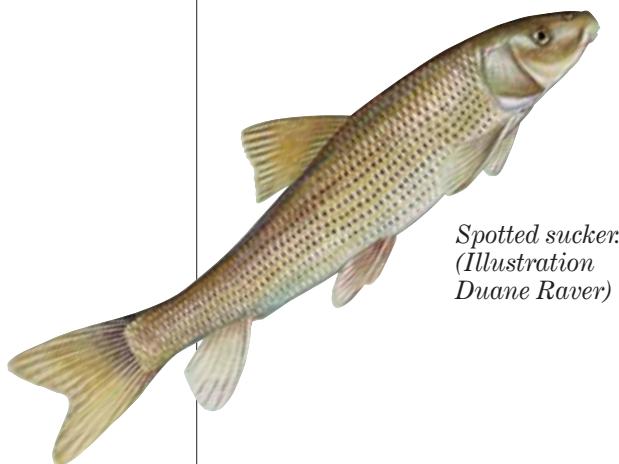
*Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge (Maryland) holds a kids fishing event where volunteer anglers provide helpful advice. (Photo Robert H. Pos, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

### **Delivering Quality Recreation and Education Programs**

During August 2005, the **Friends of Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge** (New Jersey) and volunteers spent 308 hours to construct a 15 foot by 15 foot wheelchair accessible observation platform. Located along the popular Grassland Trail, the new platform provides unobstructed views of the tidal marsh. The Friends of Supawna Meadows has adopted the trail and observation platform and will help oversee this project. They also intend to support the Refuge's efforts to control invasive species in the marsh.

On October 1, 2005, the **Friends of the White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery** (West Virginia) hosted the first Freshwater Folk Festival at the hatchery. The newly formed Friends organization is dedicated to promoting understanding, appreciation, and conservation of freshwater resources. Approximately 1,000 visitors attended the free event. Families enjoyed music performed by a local folk group and the "river of life" touch tank, which included crayfish, minnows, and other creek species. Local elementary school children produced over 100 environmental art posters that were posted on the Raceway Fish Rearing Building.

On September 23 and 24, 2005, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge and the **Friends of the Heinz National Wildlife Refuge** (Pennsylvania) hosted the second annual "Cradle of Birding Festival." The popular gathering featured the winners of the 2005 Refuge photography contest. From 800 to 1,000 visitors enjoyed tying fishing flies, visiting exhibits and displays set up by many Refuge partners, seeing lively wildlife demonstrations, and listening to a variety of guest speakers.



*Spotted sucker.  
(Illustration  
Duane Raver)*



*Wetlands at Supawna NWR (New Jersey). (Photo Gene Nieminen)*

### **Other**

The **Friends of Genoa National Fish Hatchery** (Wisconsin) hosted an open house and dedication of the Lake Sturgeon Culture Building on August 9, 2005. Ongoing activities included a kids' fishing tank stocked with rainbow trout, tours and displays of fisheries capture equipment, and a carnival booth. Tours of the new hatchery building were given throughout the day.

On September 23, 2005, the **Friends of Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Patuxent Research Refuge** (Maryland) hosted Congressional and State staff members for a tour of the National Wildlife Visitor Center and Refuge. Guests learned more about the Center's efforts to educate the public about environmental issues facing National Wildlife Refuges, research projects at the Refuge, management programs, visitor services, cultural resource management, and facility issues.

On the weekend of August 27 and 28, 2005, the **Friends of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge** (New Mexico) held its fifth annual Dragonfly Festival. Over 500 people attended and had an opportunity to join dragonfly experts on guided van tours. Other activities included a guided bird watching tour, Refuge discovery tour, face painting, kids' art table, and conservation exhibits. A children's poster contest held prior to the Dragonfly Festival garnered more than 890 entries from the local community.

Until 2005, there were no Friends organizations in Alaska. Last year, supporters of Alaskan refuges convened to remedy the situation by forming a new non-profit organization, **Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges** (Alaska). The new Friends organization will represent all of Alaska's 16 National Wildlife Refuges. The goals of the organization include educating the public and decision makers about Alaska's refuge programs, developing a communication network for potential refuge supporters, and raising funds for refuge projects.

# Partner Highlights

Each year, the Fish and Wildlife Service works with an ever-widening group of other organizations. Long-time partners, such as the Student Conservation Association, National Environmental Education Training Foundation (National Public Lands Day), Boy Scouts of America, and Girls Scouts of the United States of America volunteer many hours in support of our projects. New partners join the ranks every year. In 2005, the National Aquarium of Baltimore and the Kenaitz Indian Tribe supported important volunteer projects in Maryland and Alaska, respectively.

## National Public Lands Day

National Public Lands Day, sponsored by the National Environmental Education Training Foundation (NEETF), is the largest volunteer hands-on activity of its kind in the country. Every September on a Saturday designated as National Public Lands Day, thousands of volunteers roll up their sleeves and make significant improvements to America's public lands. The event for 2005 was held on September 24. The event's five sponsoring Federal agencies thanked volunteer participants by giving each a free entry day to any public land site managed by the five agencies during the following year.

At Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge (California), Friends of the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge and the Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach hosted an event as part of Toyota's California Public Lands Day Tour. During the gathering, hundreds of volunteers removed invasive weeds and planted native vegetation. The Friends of Seal Beach also received \$2,000 from Toyota to continue its excellent work.

The Alpena Fishery Resources Office and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge (Ohio) hosted a National Public Lands Day event that included a small scale habitat restoration project. A group of volunteers helped stabilize a 140-foot long bank along Crane Creek. Volunteers will spend the winter growing native vegetation to plant along the bank during the 2006 National Public Lands Day event.

## Student Conservation Association

For more than 20 years, the Fish and Wildlife Service and Student Conservation Association (SCA) have been successful partners. It is a perfect union. The Fish and Wildlife Service has a range of important projects, from environmental education and interpretation to monitoring stream habitat, stocking streams, collecting data collection, and more, while the SCA has volunteers interested in working. Through its Conservation Intern Program, the SCA recruits college interns who work from 12 to 52 weeks. They also provide Conservation Crews, comprised of high school students recruited from across the nation, which are teamed with experienced crew leaders to complete a summer work project.

Volunteers from the SCA worked at the **Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge** (Alaska) to map a composite burn index (a measure of burn severity) for the 2003 Black Hills Fire. The refuge is designated a Land Management Research Demonstration Area for fire ecology in the boreal forest. Volunteers assisted in collecting data regarding the severity of the effects of this burn on the Refuge's landscape. This information will be used for designing future studies in the area and as a tool in understanding the ecology of fire in the boreal forest. The same crew worked at five refuges over the summer to collect ground plot data (composite burn index and vegetation data) from 347 plots spread across six fires.

A SCA high school trail crew, working on the **Kenai National Wildlife Refuge** (Alaska), completed a new hiking trail and boardwalk to the Swanson River. The ground is extremely wet in this area, so much of the .5 mile trail consists of constructed elevated walkways. The new trail connects the Refuge's outdoor education center to the Swanson River and provides great wildlife viewing opportunities in boreal forest and muskeg habitats.

Veneasa Melton, a SCA intern, worked at the **Audubon National Wildlife Refuge Complex** (North Dakota) during the spring and summer of 2005 to help protect and monitor piping plover nests. Ms. Melton also participated in waterfowl counts, colonial nesting surveys, invasive weed control, and many other tasks related to wildlife habitat management.

*Volunteers provide expertise and muscle to build at boardwalk at Lee Metcalf NWR (Montana). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*



*The Tribes helped the refuge identify and protect petroglyphs and other refuge resources. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*





*Volunteers teach girl scouts about wildlife and other aspects of natural history at Trempealeau NWR (Wisconsin). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

### **Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts**

In June 2005, Eagle Scout candidate Robby Stenson, a member of Boy Scout Troop 59 in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, started work on a project to build a photography blind at the **Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge** (Minnesota). Other scout volunteers joined him by helping to clear brush and trees and level the trail and blind site, contributing 310 hours of labor. After designing the blind at his Scoutmaster's residence, Robby Stenson then dismantled and hauled it to the blind for reassembly. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Saturday, September 17, 2005, to recognize his contributions and celebrate the availability of the new photography blind.

The Riverland Girl Scout Council worked at the **Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge** (Wisconsin) on a "Linking Girls to the Land" event, which included adopting a section of prairie to maintain. On June 4, the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Perrot State Park, University of Wisconsin-Extension 4-H Youth Development, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources worked together to offer six education stations for the scouts to learn more about conservation. Sixty-eight Girl Scouts participated in this half day event at the Refuge. Afterwards, the Scouts spread more than two million wildflower seeds and grasses over the five acres of adopted prairie on the Refuge.

Through the Service's "Nature of Learning" environmental education initiative, the Farthest North Girl Scout Council was awarded a grant to work with the **Arctic and Tetlin National Wildlife Refuges** (Alaska) to support two seven-day residential camps for girls in the Alaskan communities of Tok, Northway, Tanacross and Arctic Village. Council and Refuge staff plan to recreate a traditional Athabascan summer home of woven willow and caribou hides. Participants will learn and practice traditional skills and use scientific observation to become knowledgeable about traditional methods of construction.



*Boy scouts at the National Boy Scout Jamboree, Fort AP Hill, VA. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/NCTC)*

The National Boy Scout Jamboree was held at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, from July 23 through August 4, 2005. The Fish and Wildlife Service's **National Conservation and Training Center** developed an exhibit and coordinated 27 volunteers who helped make a difference in the life journey of many Boy Scouts who visited the exhibit areas. One volunteer, Bob Sousa, worked with industry leaders in the major fly fishing, sport fishing, and trade shows to support the Fish Hook Lake event at the Jamboree. Bob was able to register volunteers who, over a two week period, contributed 1,771 hours of work. Bob alone contributed 432 hours and served as an instructor for the Fly Casting clinic. An estimated 50,000 Scouts visited the Fish Hook Lake exhibit and about 30,000 Scouts visited the Conservation Trail exhibit area.



*Don Williams, a volunteer from the American Indian Scouting Association, and two young boy scouts at the National Boy Scout Jamboree, Fort AP Hill, VA. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service/NCTC)*



*Sixty-eight Girl Scouts learned about Trempealeau NWR (Wisconsin) during a special one day event that included wildflower and grass planting. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*



Several local grade school students learn about birds from refuge staff and Montana Audubon Society volunteers at Lee Metcalf NWR (Montana). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

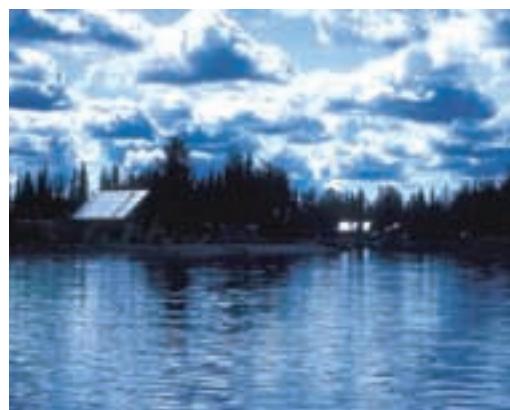
## New Partners

### National Aquarium of Baltimore

With the **Barren Island National Wildlife Refuge** (Maryland) serving as a backdrop, the Service's Northeastern Regional Director and the Director of the National Aquarium in Baltimore signed a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in conservation efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The signing ceremony occurred as part of a week-long wetland restoration project on the island, during which volunteers, agency staff, and the Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge undertook a massive revegetation project. More than 50 acres of estuarine wetland have been restored and several miles of shoreline have been protected. An informal working relationship between the Service, Aquarium, other partners, and volunteers spans a decade and includes aquatic and island habitat restoration projects on the **Eastern Neck and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuges** (Maryland).



A student volunteer helps with goose banding at Arapaho NWR (Colorado). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Kenai River, Kenai NWR (Alaska). (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)



Painted Bunting. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

### Kenaitze Indian Tribe

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe and **Kenai National Wildlife Refuge** (Alaska) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement on June 23, 2005 for the management and interpretation of the Darien-Lindren Historical Cabin. This historic log cabin currently sits as a partial ruin along the banks of the Kenai River within the Refuge. The area is the past site of a Denai'ina Athabascan Indian village and possesses a rich cultural history. Under the terms of the agreement, the Tribe, Refuge, and volunteers will work to restore and relocate the cabin.

# Take Pride in America



*The “Get Outdoors Nevada” program established a community connection for all volunteers interested in working on public lands. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

Take Pride in America is a national partnership established by the Department of the Interior that aims to engage, support, and recognize volunteers who work to improve public lands, including national wildlife refuges. Interior Secretary Donald Hodel initiated the program in 1985. After a brief hiatus, former Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton relaunched the program in 2003.

The Take Pride in America mission embraces three tenets: awareness, action, and awards. Creating awareness helps to underscore the importance of Federal, State, and local lands and resources and creates appreciation for them. Encouraging action inspires volunteers to help maintain and enhance our shared spaces. Providing awards honors individuals and groups for the efforts they have made to support these programs.

## Service Employees and Partners Honored

The annual Take Pride in America awards recognize exceptional stewardship in the following categories: corporations, individuals, non-profit organizations, schools, local or state governments, volunteers, or Federal land managers. All of the Take Pride in America award winners were honored during special events in Washington, D.C. on September 29–30, 2005. Four of the individuals and groups that were recognized are associated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



*Former Secretary for Interior Gale Norton, center, recognized Mark Musaus, right, manager of Arthur R. Loxahatchee NWR (Florida), for his efforts to support the tenets of the Take Pride in America Program. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

**Mark Musaus** has been named one of five Federal Land Managers of the Year. As Refuge Manager of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, he collaborated on a variety of initiatives with the University of Florida, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the South Florida Water Management District. He facilitated cooperation among biologists and other scientists and, by working with partners, was able to more than triple the amount of funding available to remove invasive nonnative species that threaten this important Florida refuge. Mark Musaus also serves on the Refuge System’s National Mentor team to help Friends organizations increase volunteer efforts.

The **Friends of Anahuac Refuge** (FOAR) in Anahuac, Texas, received an award for a very successful public-private partnership. FOAR supports the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located on the upper Texas Gulf Coast. Over the last year, Friends members designed and constructed a 1.5-acre butterfly and hummingbird landscape that provides nectar and host plants for 15 butterfly species, as well as nectar for ruby-throated hummingbirds. Friends’ President Chuck Redell noted, “Volunteers did everything from helping to pour and stamp the accessible concrete trail to planting, weeding, mulching and watering.”

FOAR applied for and received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Centennial Refuge Legacy grant for \$13,500 to fund the new landscape. Cash and in-kind donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations more than doubled the funds available for this unusual project. More than 110 volunteers donated about 2,000 hours to build the trail and restore native habitats. Individuals or organizations have subsequently adopted nine of the 16 butterfly or hummingbird “beds,” weeding and mulching them and planting, as needed.

The **Texas Master Naturalist Program** has been honored as a statewide initiative. Since its beginning in 1998, the program has grown to 27 self-sufficient volunteer-led chapters of highly trained naturalists. In 2004 alone, the program trained 531 Master Naturalists and reached out to 333,387 youth, adults, and private landowners. Seven of the 11 national wildlife refuges in Texas work with Master Naturalist chapters. At Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, the Friends and Master Naturalist chapters worked together to secure a \$50,000 grant for the Refuge. Master Naturalists do everything from removing invasive species and maintaining trails to monitoring water quality and conserving habitats.



*Seven of 11 national wildlife refuges in Texas rely upon volunteers from the Texas Master Naturalist program, which was recognized by the Take Pride in America Program. (Photo U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)*

The Southern Nevada Interagency Volunteer Program was honored for its “Get Outdoors Nevada” program that established a community connection for all volunteers interested in working on public lands. A single web site offers a calendar of events, training schedules, and volunteer applications. The program recruited 585 volunteers who contributed almost 3,000 hours to clean-up sites, repair trails, restore habitat, and provide visitor services and education. Callie Le’au Courtright is the volunteer coordinator for the Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex, which includes Desert, Moapa Valley, Ash Meadows and Pahranagat Refuges. She represents the Service in the inter-agency partnership that includes the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. D.A. Forest Service. “People don’t really distinguish between agencies,” says Le’au Courtright, “so the partnership provides a central clearinghouse for anyone interested in volunteering on public lands.”

## Contacts

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