Upper Colorado Reflections

REFLECTIONS OF THE UPPER COLORADO CORPS—The Bureau of Reclamation employees tragically killed in a Colorado air crash on October 8, 1997 are remembered by family, friends, and co-workers and paid tribute by national leaders for their rich legacy of service and achievement. Pages 8-11.
Ah, Wilderness—Bol Hesselbart, Steve Bair, and Kelly Hartse developed an award-winning way to build public support for wilderness preservation. 14

Sinister Willow—The Interior department retiree? 27

Visit to a Fish Mine—Towanna Thompson feeds hatchlings at Maryland mine site. 21

Passing the Torch—Former Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ada Deer, left, shares a reflective moment with her successor, new Assistant Secretary Kevin Gover. Why does Gover want one of the toughest jobs in the Federal Government? 26

USGS Emeriti Dish the Dirt on Mars

Pat Jorgenson and Heidi Koehler

What the rover found on Mars and the effects of an asteroid impact in southern Nevada 370 million years ago were two of the news making stories presented by USGS scientists emeriti at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Salt Lake City. More than 100 USGS scientists joined about 4,000 earth scientists from around the world at the October 19-23 meeting, whose theme this year was Global Connections.

“This is an example of the top-notch service that USGS scientists provide to the public through our emeritus program,” said Chief Geologist P. Patrick Leahy. “They comprise about 15 percent of the professional scientific staff of the Geologic Division, contribute to the mission, participate in program reviews, serve as mentors, and supply institutional knowledge. We are very grateful for their commitment to the USGS and continue to be amazed with their accomplishments,” Leahy said.

Henry J. Moore, a USGS scientist emeritus, is a member of the NASA ’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory team that has been receiving and interpreting data and images from the Pathfinder since it landed on Mars on July 4. When the rover Sojourner spun its wheels, Moore measured the torque, angle of friction, and the Martian soil. He determined that some of the soils were fine-grained clays or silts, much like the rover would have encountered in many dry washes in the western United States.

Moore also described one of the rocks the rover encountered—named ‘Shark’ by mission scientists—as strongly resembling the Wastach conglomerate, a sedimentary rock common in northern Utah. The rounded stones of the conglomerate and silts found on Mars suggest that the Martian climate was once warmer and wetter, an environment that could have supported life.

Charles A. Sandberg, another USGS scientist emeritus, presented evidence that a meteorite struck: shocked quartz grains, an iridium anomaly, and spherical carbonate ejecta. Shocked quartz grains are sand grains pervasively shattered by the force of an impact. Iridium is a platinum-like element that is rare on Earth but common in meteorites. Carbonate spherules are formed from limestone fragments that recrystallize within a superheated cloud.

Three lines of evidence found in area mountain ranges suggest that a meteorite struck: shocked quartz grains, an iridium anomaly, and spherical carbonate ejecta. Shocked quartz grains are sand grains pervasively shattered by the force of an impact. Iridium is a platinum-like element that is rare on Earth but common in meteorites. Carbonate spherules are formed from limestone fragments that recrystallize within a superheated cloud.

All three features have been recorded at other impact sites on Earth, such as those that may have caused the extinction of the dinosaurs hundreds of millions of years later. The Alamo may have contributed to an earlier extinction, one of the five great mass extinctions recorded in Earth’s history.

John D. Bredehoft, retired USGS scientist, was awarded the Penrose Medal at the recent Geological Society of America annual meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. The medal is awarded in recognition of eminent research in pure geology. Bredehoft was recognized for his 32 years of work with the USGS on contaminant-transport modeling, ground-water management, earthquake prediction, and ground-water flow in deep sedimentary basins. Also at the October 19-23 meeting, a special symposium was held in honor of William Back, USGS scientist emeritus, entitled Recent Advances in Chemical Hydrogeology: A Tribute to William Back’s 50-year Career. Back was honored for pioneering investigations of geochemical processes in ground water, developing the concept of hydrochemical facies, describing hydrochemical evolution of ground water in coastal carbonate aquifers, and synthesizing information on human activities and the chemistry of ground water.

Also honored was Leonard F. Konikow who received the Geological Society of America’s 1997 O. E. Meinzer Award. The award is presented in recognition of
During his undergraduate days at Clark Atlanta University, Roman Turman lettered in basketball, track, and football. On earning a bachelor’s degree in social work in 1952, he chose a career in professional sports and joined the famed Harlem Globetrotters. For several years, including 1958 when he was the team’s most valuable player, he and his teammates traveled throughout the world entertaining audiences. “We played to packed houses in just about every city in America and throughout Europe and even helped introduce professional basketball to the former Soviet Union,” he recalled with a smile. He later joined the National Basketball Association and played with the New York Knicks. 

Turman remains close to many of his former Globetrotter teammates, including Wilt Chamberlain, Meadowlark Lemon, Leon Hilliard, Clarence Wilson, and John Cheney, who now coaches basketball at Temple University. Now that he is retired from active sports, Turman is using his family-oriented skills, honed while traveling with the Globetrotters, to working with school children as a member of Gateway National Recreation Area’s Community Outreach Division.

The soft-spoken native of Georgia says that he will never forget his Globetrotter experiences. “We had fun on the courts. Wilt Chamberlain’s top salary was $65,000, $8,000 more than the rest of the team but returned to his adopted home, New York, in the early 1960s to help start the South Bronx Job Corps Center. He joined Gateway’s Job Corps Center in 1983 and the Gateway staff earlier this year.

Because he still has many friends in the game, Turman is reluctant to comment on how professional basketball has changed. He admits, however, that players of his era were more concerned about the game then they are today. “Today it’s the money and basketball is being priced out of the reach of many fans, especially the young people who are tomorrow’s fans,” he says.

“When I played ball, the Globetrotters played to packed houses everywhere. We played for a week in London and could have filled the arena had we stayed an additional week,” he says. He credits the game with helping him develop not only as an athlete but as a humble being. The Globetrotters taught him to appreciate family-oriented activities and he is able to relate this orientation to the many positive benefits of national park areas such as Gateway, he says. “I’ve traveled the world but it’s good to be home,” he adds.
Employees March Against Workplace Discrimination

The National Association for the Advancement of Black Federal Employees held a rally and march protesting discrimination against African Americans at the Interior Department.

“The Interior Department has won the dubious distinction of being, as one administration official said, ‘the whitest of all’ in a survey of several departments’ hiring practices,” the employee group noted in announcing the October 21 demonstration. Interior has the lowest percentage of African American employees—six percent—of all federal agencies, according to government surveys.

The group, which assembled around noon at Rawlins Park across from the E Street entrance to the Main Interior Building, heard several speakers relate their work experiences and call for action. The demonstration lasted several hours. Representatives of the Association and Congressman Albert Wynn met with Secretary Babbitt to detail and reiterate the group’s message and protest.

“This demonstration clearly focuses attention on a fundamental problem at the Department, Secretary Babbitt said in an official announcement after his meeting with Rep. Wynn and Association officials. ‘I’ve met to assure them that, as Secretary, I fully recognize the seriousness of their grievances and that I am firmly committed to improving the department’s diversity profile and eliminating discrimination in the workplace, wherever it exists.”

Several initiatives are now underway that directly address the critical need to improve workforce diversity at all employment levels and bureaus within the department,” Babbitt explained. “With the assistance of a high level task force of senior managers and employees at each of the Department’s bureaus, we are implementing a strategic diversity initiative that is results oriented.

“The initiative has been endorsed by the directors of each bureau and will be monitored by Deputy Secretary John Garamendi, the newly appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary for Workforce Diversity David Montoya, and myself. In addition, I have issued a memorandum that calls for ‘zero tolerance’ of any type of harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation,” the Secretary said. “The Interior Department manages and protects America’s extraordinary cultural and natural resources on behalf of all Americans. It is essential that our workforce reflects the abundant diversity of this nation, as well.”

Interior employees held a rally and march October 21 to protest discrimination against African American employees in hiring and promotion at Interior. Above, from left, are Laurence Lucas, president of the Coalition of Minority Employees (Agriculture); Romelle Arnold, vice-president, NAABFE; Rep. Albert Wynn (Maryland); John Boyd, president of the Black Farmers Association (Agriculture); and Sandra McCurry, president of NAABFE.

Photos by Robert Jones, Jr., ISC

Department Pledges Greater Effort in Recruiting Minority Employees

Carrie Kemper, Assistant Editor, PLW

Holding managers accountable and zero tolerance for workplace discrimination are key elements of Interior’s strategic plan to improve diversity at all levels of the Department.

Secretary Babbitt and Deputy Secretary John Garamendi announced Interior’s diversity campaign—dubbed One America, One Interior, One Goal—with a signing ceremony in the auditorium of Interior Headquarters on December 3. The plan outlines the Department’s mission to diversify the workforce to reflect the diversity of America, while retaining quality employees and prohibiting discrimination.

The five components of the plan are: recruit a workforce that reflects America’s diversity, retain that workforce, ensure accountability at the Secretarial and Bureau levels for improved diversity, educate and train managers and employees on diversity issues, and allow zero tolerance for workplace discrimination. The plan calls for greater effort in recruiting and holding onto minorities and mandates periodic checks of discrimination complaints against managers. New procedures that monitor managers’ efforts to achieve these goals are a key part of the plan.

“Accountability of managers and supervisors strikes to the bone” of all the efforts, Secretary Babbitt told several hundred employees attending the ceremony. “This is the beginning of something good. Let’s now carry it out and make it happen.”

Earlier he joked that lawyers had not ruined the strategic plan, which he called “an extraordinary piece of work.” Interior agencies had until January 3 to submit to the Department a bureau workforce diversity plan that responds to and implements the Interior diversity plan.

The ceremony took place during a week of diversity awareness-raising activities and training sessions. Interior Senior Executive Service managers attended an all-day diversity training session on December 2. At a Dialogue on Race & Natural Resources, held at the MB auditorium on December 3, Deputy Secretary Garamendi and a panel explored the role that race plays in conserving America’s cultural and natural resources. Students from area high schools and universities participated in Interior mentoring and discovery programs on December 4.

Interior’s Diversity Week Activities, which began with a December 1 wreath laying ceremony in honor of World AIDS Day, were held in conjunction with the President’s One America: Conversations that Bring Us Together initiative on race. The goal is to move the country closer to a stronger, more just, and more unified America that offers opportunity and fairness for all citizens. The President held a national town hall on race in Akron, Ohio, on December 3.
Water is a nationwide magnet for recreation and America’s lakes—including 1,800 federally-built reservoirs—are a number one drawing card for millions of people. Americans take an estimated 1.8 billion trips a year to go fishing, boating, camping, and relaxing around water. More than 60 million Americans—a quarter of the population—fish and hunt.

This national trend provides challenges and opportunities for federal land and water managers— in meeting the need for more public recreation without adversely affecting power generation, irrigation, and wildlife protection.

Recognizing the increasing demand for water-based recreation across the United States, the Congress created the National Recreation Lakes Commission to review the current and anticipated demand for public recreation at federally-constructed lakes and reservoirs, and to develop alternatives for enhanced recreation use of those facilities. PL 104-333, the Omnibus Parks and Public Land Management Act of 1996, created a nine-member, Presidentially-appointed commission to conduct a National Recreation Lakes Study and consider the development of a National Recreation Lakes System.

Under this proposal, some lakes would receive national designation and be managed through partnership agreements among federal, state, and local government agencies and the private sector. A final report to the President and the Congress will offer options and recommendations, including the possible creation of a National Recreation Lakes System and the criteria for such a designation.

Some commission recommendations could be carried out by the adoption of new policies, while others may require new legislation. A major challenge for the Administration in carrying out the commission’s mandate is to ensure that the ethos of stewardship and the principles of sustainable communities and community-based problem solving are woven into the fabric of the National Recreation Lakes Study Commission.

The staff of the National Recreation Lakes Study Commission is under the leadership of Executive Director Jana Prewitt, assistant to the Secretary of the Interior (FWS) and director of External Affairs. All interested parties are encouraged to participate in the process by submitting ideas, comments, and concerns. The commission’s website address is www.doi.gov/nrls/.

The commission will study how improvements in roads, utilities, buildings, and management of facilities at these sites could be accomplished through innovative partnerships with the private sector and evaluate the viability of private sector development of public attractions at the lakes, including marinas, lodgings, nature centers, golf courses, visitor centers, and other amenities. The commission is mandated to ensure that the conservation of watershed and ecosystem values is a primary objective of the process to plan for recreation uses and construction of facilities.

These lakes and reservoirs are a driving economic force and anchor of the travel and tourism industry in local communities. The economic benefits from these recreational areas exceed $40 billion annually. In total employment associated with these sites is more than 600,000. In 1994, for example, the lakes operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers drew 340 million visitors who spent more than $12 billion on recreation and generated about 200,000 new jobs. More than 46 percent of all lake fishing across the nation occurs at federal sites. Visitation to federal lands and waters is expected to increase two percent annually over the next 20 years.

Fishing and boating on American lakes have become a major economic pillar of many local communities, like those near Laurel River Lake, above, in Nashville, Tennessee.

The system will record the employee’s name and the time, date, and place of entry into the building. However, the information will not be used to maintain time and attendance records, according to John Berry, the new assistant secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, who also spoke at the briefing session. Visitors to the Interior complex will need photo identification and will pass through magnetometer and x-ray machines and have their bags searched at the E and C Street entrances and at the tunnel to the GSA Building. They will be given Visitor Badges, designating them as either business visitors or public access guests.

Other security measures include the installation of 11 closed circuit television cameras around the perimeter of MIB and at some inside locations. The perimeter will be monitored 24 hours a day on screens at the C Street guard desk, the project managers office, and ISC Physical Security Office. Tapes will be kept for one month. Guard booths have been installed at the top of the ramps to underground parking areas and modifications have been made to gates and doors. Heightened but behind-the-scenes security measures, such as mail screenings, have been phased in over the last two years. Currently, these new safety measures will only affect the Main and South Interior Buildings. There are plans to eventually move toward standardized security procedures at all Interior sites. For more information, please call 202-208-5111.
USGS employees Wes Ward, Ivo Lucchitta, John Sass, and Wendell Duffield were having lunch with the publisher of Flagstaff's local newspaper when the idea began to take shape. They all realized that Flagstaff has a wealth of scientific talent and institutions and that public recognition and celebration of this valuable community resource was overdue. "Fiesta! The Flagstaff Science Festival was born. The USGS Flagstaff Field Center has participated in this community profit effort since its inception in 1990. Over the past eight years, the event has grown from a 3-day weekend to a 10-day event with 20 scientific institutions participating.

The festival is designed to promote science awareness and enthusiasm in northern Arizona, as well as enhance a science education alliance between local schools and local scientific institutions. It gives local scientists an opportunity to share with the community, schools, and visitors the excitement and adventure of careers in science. Activities include field trips, open houses, lectures, and an in-school speakers program.

This year's 8th Annual Flagstaff Festival of Science was held September 26-October 5 with a theme of Science, The Ultimate Voyage. The USGS participated in many festival events. Sue Priest, who is with the USGS Flagstaff Field Center, coordinated the Center's participation in the event. She also served as a member of the festival's volunteer Board of Directors and co-chaired the education committee.

Several USGS specialists presented after school and evening lectures. James Dobhn, of the Geologic Division, discussed Ancient Channel Development on Mars; Erika Nowak revealed The Truth about Rainbows; Sue Priest discussed Finding the Earth from Afar; Using Remote Sensing; and Wendell Duffield presented On the Trail of an Elusive Volcano. The festival also offered an array of in-school presentations, giving teachers the opportunity to bring science into their classroom without the expense of field trips. More than 100 in-school presentations were arranged. In addition, USGS specialists enjoyed interacting with the public, especially the kids. The weather is always beautiful, the people are enthusiastic and we are exhausted after four hours.

Since 1995, the festival also includes Science-in-the-Park activities. USGS specialists enjoyed interacting with the public, outside, on a Saturday, at a downtown park. Nearly 3,000 visitors stopped by USGS displays and hands-on activities. "This event is my favorite outreach activity of the year," said Sue Beard, geologist. "It's a great chance to interact with the public, especially the kids. The weather is always beautiful, the people are enthusiastic and we are exhausted after four hours.

Visitors to the USGS booths were thrilled with a full-scale model of the Mars Pathfinder rover and a 9-foot long stereo image of the landing site—with descriptions and explanations by Jeff Johnson, Wes Ward, Jeff Kargel, and Adrienne Wasserman. With help from Rob Anderson (Jet Propulsion Laboratory). In a nearby booth, Sue Beard, Debra Block, Darlene Casebier, and Wes Ward assisted children in making paper models of either a strike-slip fault or a transform fault. Gordon Hazel introduced fossils with plaster casts and the geologic time scale. "I liked the way USGS people actively engaged us in sharing the joys of science," said visitor Nancy Brian. "We still have our paper trilobite model on the refrigerator."

Wendy Calvin, Wendell Duffield, and Tony Rosanoica walked in circles all day teaching people how to use a compass to navigate an oceanic cruise. George Billingsley helped folks see 3-D using air photos and stereo photos while Deborah Lee Salazar and Stuart Sides gave visitors red blue glasses for a different 3-D experience. Erika Nowak brought a mother rattlesnake and her babies to the park. A ground water model and surface water sampling tools were demonstrated by Marilyn Flynn, Margot Trunin, Bob Hart, Greg Litton, Anita Rosland, Frank Schaffner, and Kent Sherman. Bob Mark displayed photos of some of the beautiful rock art within the new Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Claire Longpre, Debbie Moore, Tommy Becker, and Lynn Weller ran the USGS information booth answering questions, distributing USGS educational material, raising posters, and stamping hundreds of student passports.

An underwater archeological expedition is searching the waters of Drakes Bay at Point Reyes National Seashore for the wreckage of a 16th century Manila galleon—the earliest known shipwreck on the West Coast. A team of National Park scuba divers is using a specially built shark cage and net to explore the sandy bottom of Drakes Bay in an attempt to pinpoint the location of the San Augustin, which sank in 1595 in a squall. Its cargo was probably a load of silks and porcelains from the Orient.

This first phase of the project, begun in October, will include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may include surveying and perhaps dating any finds in the Bay where several shipwrecks are known to be. The project will be completed in 1998. The galleon may.
DECONSTRUCTING DAMS

From a floating barge on North Carolina’s Neuse River, Secretary Babbitt struck a first blow on December 17, officially beginning the demolition of the 55-year-old Quaker Neck Dam. Removing the 260-foot long, structure near Goldsboro is a voluntary watershed restoration project that will unlock 925 miles of freshwater spawning habitat for American shad and striped bass. A month earlier, Babbitt lauded the unprecedented order of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to remove the 160-year-old Edwards Dam in Augusta, Maine to help restore spawning habitat for nine migratory fish in the Kennebec River.

“This Quaker Neck dam removal is far more than a symbol of the shifting tide in American conservation,” Babbitt said. “By unlocking current from headwaters to the Atlantic, we yield a real windfall for the state’s sportfishing industry.” The project, carried out by a public-private partnership among state and federal agencies, fisheries groups, and Carolina Power & Light, will improve fish habitat along 75 miles of the Neuse and replenish 925 miles of tributary spawning areas for migratory fish. It will significantly boost recreational fisheries on the river, pumping new revenues into rural communities that serve the state’s one million anglers.

The landmark decision on the Edward’s Dam—the first time in the commission’s 77-year history that it has denied the relicensing of an operating hydroelectric dam and ordered its removal—will restore salmon, shad, and shortnose sturgeon to 17 miles of the Kennebec, which was first dammed at this site in 1837 to drive machinery in a cotton mill. It was later converted to generate hydro-electric power.

“The commission made a difficult but brave decision,” Babbitt said, “that a river is more than the sum of its kilowatt hours, that its potential energy goes far beyond any electricity it may generate. The Kennebec can once again stand as a model for the nation. Its true power will become self-evident in the many species of migratory fish that will soon swim and spawn there again, in the anglers who will seek them, and in the local sustainable sportfishing economy that will steadily grow up around those anglers and recreationalists.”

The commission oversees the operations of hydroelectric dams that are owned privately or by utilities or local governments. In 1986 Congress directed the commission to give as much consideration to environmental protection as it does to the availability and need for power. Most large hydropower in the West are owned and operated by the Federal Government which is not subject to the commission’s oversight and licensing authority.

Dams are the major cause of declining populations of salmon and other migratory fish species, many of which are now endangered. The structures prevent species that run to the sea from returning upstream to spawn. The Departments of the Interior and Commerce, and the State of Maine were joined by conservation groups in support of Edward’s removal. The dam’s owner has a year to file a plan.

The Edwards precedent is expected to bolster river restoration efforts across the United States as the commission evaluates the renewal of hundreds of licenses on privately-owned dams over the next 15 years. There are about 2,000 such hydroelectric dams in the United States. The Quaker Neck project sets an example for cooperative voluntary removal of nonessential hydroelectric dams. Other dams facing demolition include the Elwah Dam in Washington state. Removal of the Elwah, which blocks rich salmon runs, was approved by Senator Slade Gorton in July.

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Hydro Pacts Help Restore Species and Habitat

Earlier this year in a ceremony at the Pine River Hydro Dam, which will be removed to bring back free flowing waters, Secretary Babbitt endorsed an agreement between the Wisconsin Electric Power Company, state and federal officials, and conservation groups, to improve three watersheds, replenish 160 river miles, and protect more than 22,000 acres of pristine lands in the Menominee River Basin of Wisconsin and Michigan.

The 40-year, landmark settlement represents the first time in America that a utility, public officials, and environmentalists have negotiated a cooperative agreement prior to the start of the relicensing process. Wisconsin Electric, serving thousands of customers, will continue profitable, low-cost energy production. By improving the watershed for brook trout, lake sturgeon, smallmouth bass, and walleye, as well as for hunting and rafting throughout the area, the agreement will boost and broaden the diverse, renewable recreation-driven economy.

In another initiative, the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program helped to broker a landmark pact with New England power officials that will protect tens of thousands of acres along the region’s rivers and lakes. The Settlement Agreement for the Connecticut River’s Fishers Mile and hydroelectric project—the largest in New England—was signed by the governors of Vermont and New Hampshire and New England Power just before the utility filed an application for a new 40-year license. The agreement ensures the donation of permanent conservation easements affecting about 11,000 acres as well as 50 miles of permanent protection of river and lake shorelines in Vermont and New Hampshire. It also ensures operational changes that will lead to improvements in fisheries and wildlife habitat. The pact will provide for: creation of a $3 million start-up environmental enhancement fund for the upper Connecticut River and $10.5 to $13.5 million over the next 15 years; completion of environmental studies and management plans; and continued environmental stewardship for the term of the license. Many federal, state, and local government agencies and more than a dozen environmental organizations participated in the negotiations, which were completed in nine months, a record for this type of settlement, which was signed on September 2. The contact is Kevin Mendlik, (617) 223-5299.

Uncovering Fort Wadsworth

More than 60 park staff and volunteers joined hands at Fort Wadsworth, the newest National Park site in New York City, to help preserve some of the gun emplacements at the stronghold overlooking New York Harbor. The fort is part of Gateway National Recreation Area.

This year’s Founder’s Day cleanup event marked the Park Service’s 151st birthday and was celebrated by participants with a huge cake, colorfully decorated with the Park Service arrowhead. The morning work project helped to preserve two of the fort’s 12-inch disappearing guns, and 24 four years of encroaching vegetation and eroding soil. Most of the cleanup was performed on Battery Dix, an Endicott Battery built in 1902 which boasted two huge 12-inch disappearing guns. Cleaning was also accomplished on Battery Harbour, part of the South Cliff Battery, which defended New York Harbor in one form or another since the early 1800s.

At left, staff and volunteers cleared away years of overgrown vegetation from Battery Reed, uncovering a 12-inch gun emplacement that once defended New York Harbor. The battery is at the fort Wadsworth, New York City’s newest National Park site. Below, everyone took a break for lunch and a piece of Park Service birthday cake. Decorated with the NPS arrowhead, the cake was enjoyed along with a short talk on the heritage site’s Sesquicentennial celebration.

Photos by Roger Scott

After several hours of fighting humidity and poison ivy, everyone adjourned to the picnic area where they were refreshed with grilled hot dogs, homemade salads, and soda. Superintendent Mary Gibson Scott gathered everyone for the cake cutting, taking time to voice her feelings about the Park Service and to thank those who turned out. Site Ranger Marty O’Toole gave a brief talk on Founder’s Day, highlighting the history of the country’s National Parks from its early days under other departments, including the Navy, until the National Park Service was created by an act of Congress on August 25, 1916. He emphasized that over the last 88 years the mission of the NPS had not changed, but noted that today the service had more challenges and visitors to contend with it did when it was founded.

Volunteers for the work day included maintenance and administrative staff as well interpretive rangers and summer seasonal staff. A number of individuals from Eastern National’s main office in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, were also on hand wielding shovels and rakes. Several people came from park headquarters, as well as a crew of student interns from the Interpretation-Community Outreach Division. After the festivities concluded, participants were invited to tours of Fort Wadsworth’s major sites and the newly dedicated Visitor Center and book store. Ranger Kevin Hanley conducted a tour of Battery Dix which described it’s history.
Eight members of the Bureau of Reclamation’s Upper Colorado Region and the pilot of their chartered aircraft were tragically killed in a crash in Colorado on October 8, 1997. The single-engine airplane took off from the Montrose Regional Airport on what was to be a 90-minute flight to Page, Arizona, where the employees were to attend a general power office meeting. The aircraft was found on October 10 in a rugged area known as the Uncompahgre Plateau. There were no survivors. The following memoriames were compiled from the tributes paid to these beloved men and women at the Department’s memorial service in Page, Arizona, on November 7.

Al Inman
He Made the Job Fun

“’It is difficult to describe with words the spirit of Al Inman that impacted those of us who were lucky enough to know him,’ said Steven Jarsky, a close friend and co-worker. “It is easy to express his work accomplishments, as they are real and tangible. The hard part is to describe his heart.”

Allen E. Inman, Jr. started with Reclamation in 1960 and had been the manager of the Curecanti Field Division in Montrose, Colorado, since May 1997. He was a founding father of the Snake River Area Office in 1994. The area office effort succeeded in large part because of his enthusiastic support for joining two separate project offices into one cohesive entity.

Inman was a driving force behind the new powerplant at Minidoka Dam and the uprate at Palisades. Al was able to see the completion of the Minidoka plant through his enthusiastic support and presentation of data showing the program as an efficient and cost-effective use of resources. His championing of centralized control of the power facilities in southern Idaho will soon become a reality.

Al was a skilled manager. Always willing to listen and understand, he melded solutions that were best for his people and the organization. His unpretentious, proactive, and honest approach resulted in an efficiently run office with high morale. He focused on what made the best sense for the agency and was impatient with power plays and hidden agendas.

Al, who was 47, had an uncanny ability to combine work and friendship in ways that did not jeopardize either. His sincere interest in people, his unselshfulness, his joy in living, his love of nature and the outdoors, and his smile and laughter were what his colleagues will miss the most.

“I was fortunate to spend ten years as Al’s peer, in countless meetings and on numerous road trips,” said Jarsky, “I will miss the jokes and the crazy hats. Man, he made the job fun!”

Al is survived by his wife, Marlene, and three children.

Jim Bloomfield
Always There for a Friend

“Over the past several years I was fortunate to know Jim Bloomfield and be his friend and fellow worker,” said Jeff Jones. “Jim was responsible for many of the successes I have enjoyed in my career. He helped me to understand some of the more complicated aspects of electrical engineering. He always offered to take the time to help when he could; whether on or off the job, helping a friend move or whatever, he was always there to lend a hand.

“Jim’s life was short, but his impact will be long.”

James L. Bloomfield was born March 25, 1954, in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to Charles and Dorothy Bloomfield. Jim grew up in a very loving family with his older brother and sister, Ed and Ann, in Meeker, Colorado. Jim then attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he graduated with a degree in electrical engineering.

After graduation, Jim worked for a short time in the oil field services before being hired by Reclamation as a licensed electrical engineer in 1983. Among the reclamation hydrosystems projects Jim worked on were the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington; the Twin Lakes Project in Buena Vista, Colorado; and the McPhee Dam Project near Dolores, Colorado. In 1994, Jim accepted a position as an electrical engineer at Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona.

One of Jim’s greatest joys was to spend time with his 13-year-old son, Tandy Lee Bloomfield. He visited Tandy, who lives with his mother in Dolores, Colorado, every weekend.

Like his father and grandfather, Jim was a Mason. Installed as Worshipful Master of the Page Masonic Lodge last January, he spent time with his fellow Masonic brothers on field trips, lodge excursions, and meetings. He was 43.

Jeff Waite
“My Daddy Has a New Job Now”

“Jeff Waite promoted safety, self worth, and teamwork. Many others, as well as myself, learned a great deal from Jeff,” said Mike Heiman, a co-worker since 1983. “You could always call on Jeff, day or night, and he was always available and ready to help.”

Jeffrey E. Waite started with the Bureau of Reclamation and came to Glen Canyon Dam in 1988 as a control center operator. Later, he made senior control operator and was recently selected as the powerplant operations manager.

Jeff, who was 41, had just begun his new position, but the effort and caring he put into his work had already begun to show. Jeff cared a great deal for his co-workers and for Glen Canyon Dam.

Jeff’s work was second only to his family. Jeff was a devoted family man to his parents and siblings. He had a beloved wife of 19 years, Shelly, three daughters, Lashell, Stephanie, and Jaime, and a new granddaughter, Alyssa.

“Jeff will be missed at Glen Canyon, but his spirit will always be here and with his family,” said Heiman. “And the reason I believe that is because his daughter Jaime said, ‘my daddy has a new job; he is an angel now and will be watching over us.’”

Jim is survived by his wife, Marlene, and three children.

Dephina Holliman
The Yellow Rose from Texas

Dephina D. Holliman, known around Reclamation’s Glen Canyon Dam office as the Yellow Rose from Texas, had a special ability to organize and a strong desire to learn anything new. She was a devoted wife, mother, and a hard-working, talented person.

Born in Frankfort, Germany, on July 24, 1960, Dee grew up in Texas. In January 1995, she traveled from her beloved Texas to Page, Arizona, with her husband, Lee, and their daughter, Vonne, so that Lee could accept a new position at Glen Canyon Dam.

After working in a couple of different jobs, Dee started her federal career in April 1996 working in Administration for Reclamation. The couple enjoyed working at Reclamation together.

She immediately took on the challenge of implementing the automated Travel Manager Program at Glen Canyon Dam with no formal training. Dee worked one year in Administration before being selected as a computer assistant in May 1997. Dee plunged into her work, learning everything she could. About a month before attending the meeting in Montrose, Dee shared her new skills with the Administrative staff.

Dee, who was 37, enjoyed life and deeply loved her families in Arizona and Texas. She also enjoyed country music and dancing. Dee will be remembered by her co-workers for her vivacious and inquisitive spirit.

Al Inman was a driving force behind the new powerplant at Minidoka Dam and the uprate at Palisades. Al was able to see the completion of the Minidoka plant through his enthusiastic support and presentation of data showing the program as an efficient and cost-effective use of resources. His championing of centralized control of the power facilities in southern Idaho will soon become a reality.

Al was a skilled manager. Always willing to listen and understand, he melded solutions that were best for his people and the organization. His unpretentious, proactive, and honest approach resulted in an efficiently run office with high morale. He focused on what made the best sense for the agency and was impatient with power plays and hidden agendas.

Al, who was 47, had an uncanny ability to combine work and friendship in ways that did not jeopardize either. His sincere interest in people, his unselshfulness, his joy in living, his love of nature and the outdoors, and his smile and laughter were what his colleagues will miss the most.

“I was fortunate to spend ten years as Al’s peer, in countless meetings and on numerous road trips,” said Jarsky, “I will miss the jokes and the crazy hats. Man, he made the job fun!”

Al is survived by his wife, Marlene, and three children.

Jim Bloomfield
Always There for a Friend

“Over the past several years I was fortunate to know Jim Bloomfield and be his friend and fellow worker,” said Jeff Jones. “Jim was responsible for many of the successes I have enjoyed in my career. He helped me to understand some of the more complicated aspects of electrical engineering. He always offered to take the time to help when he could; whether on or off the job, helping a friend move or whatever, he was always there to lend a hand.

“Jim’s life was short, but his impact will be long.”

James L. Bloomfield was born March 25, 1954, in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, to Charles and Dorothy Bloomfield. Jim grew up in a very loving family with his older brother and sister, Ed and Ann, in Meeker, Colorado. Jim then attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he graduated with a degree in electrical engineering.

After graduation, Jim worked for a short time in the oil field services before being hired by Reclamation as a licensed electrical engineer in 1983. Among the reclamation hydrosystems projects Jim worked on were the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington; the Twin Lakes Project in Buena Vista, Colorado; and the McPhee Dam Project near Dolores, Colorado. In 1994, Jim accepted a position as an electrical engineer at Glen Canyon Dam in Page, Arizona.

One of Jim’s greatest joys was to spend time with his 13-year-old son, Tandy Lee Bloomfield. He visited Tandy, who lives with his mother in Dolores, Colorado, every weekend.

Like his father and grandfather, Jim was a Mason. Installed as Worshipful Master of the Page Masonic Lodge last January, he spent time with his fellow Masonic brothers on field trips, lodge excursions, and meetings. He was 43.
**Jon Nees**

**Spreading Humor at the Office**

Whenever there was a crisis at the office, Jon would say, “It’s time to spread a little humor around the office,” recalled John Wilkie, a friend and co-worker. “He always gave everyone the nudge they needed to keep headed in the right direction. Whatever job needed to be done, he would volunteer to help in the interest of reducing the burden of others.

“But above that, his ability to work with such a diverse group of individuals, regarding any situation, was what made him a unique person and an outstanding performer. He had excellent communication skills and the caring and concern to help those in need, job related or not. We have lost not only a co-worker,” said Wilkie, “but also a special friend.”

**Jon E. Nees** began his professional career while attending Northern Arizona University. After obtaining a B.S. in Recreational Land Management, he worked with the National Park Service as a forestry aid in northern Arizona. He was then hired by the Bureau of Reclamation in Phoenix, Arizona, where he worked on the Central Arizona Project from 1979 until March 1997, when he accepted a position in Montrose, Colorado, as a safety and occupational health manager. While at the Arizona Projects Office, Jon worked outdoors (his first love) as a materials engineering technician and construction inspector, and then moved into the safety aspect of construction.

At best, the job of a safety person on the construction site is most difficult. Whether he was initiating new safety programs, conducting safety training, or assisting others in their safety duties, Jon had the respect of those within and outside of Reclamation.

“I knew Jon while we worked together the last ten years at Stewart Mountain and Roosevelt Dams,” said Wilkie. “Jon was a very special person and possessed those qualities you would like to have in yourself. He was very technically competent and regardless of the assigned task, day or night, Jon performed it with excellent results and without guidance.”

Jon, who was 42, is survived by his wife, Kim, and stepson Clint.

**Catrina Marie Wall**

**Her Family Meant Everything**

“I don’t remember ever hearing Catrina complain about anyone or anything,” said Kay Cowan, a friend and fellow employee. “She was a quiet person, but when she said something, you’d better listen because it was bound to be pretty important. Catrina Wall enriched my life and I am a better person for knowing her.”

Catrina Marie Wall was born January 30, 1964, in Yuma, Arizona. She began her federal career, while still in high school, at the Bureau of Reclamation’s Yuma Projects Office on November 2, 1981, as a clerk typist. She worked her way up the career ladder from clerk to civil engineering technician while still at the Yuma Office. In July 1989, Catrina transferred to the Lower Colorado Dams Project Office in Boulder City, Nevada, as an engineering technician, and in May 1991 she accepted a promotion to computer specialist. In March 1995, Catrina transferred to the Glen Canyon Office as a computer specialist.

Catrina, 33, was a hard worker, a wonderful mother, a great daughter, a giving sister, and a loyal friend. Catrina loved movies and saw most every movie that came to Page, joking that she missed the large movie selection of Las Vegas. Catrina loved her work and enjoyed helping people learn new computer skills. She was patient with everyone and guided them through the many computer system upgrades and changes.

One of Catrina’s best friends was her mother, Carmen, on whom she relied for friendship and support. Catrina was concerned about business travel because she was a single parent with two children. But Carmen helped solve her problem by moving to Page and watching the children while Catrina traveled and worked. There were many times that Carmen would come to luncheons held at the dam. One day an invitation came from Catrina to a luncheon that she and her mother were preparing for all the employees at the dam. Carmen just wanted to say thanks.

**Walt Kaltmaier**

**The Wonder-Uncle**

In the early 1960s, when he was based at Fort Huachuca, Arizona with the U.S. Army, **Walter A. Kaltmaier** was thrilled to learn that in Arizona it can rain on one side of the street while the other side remained sunny.

Though he was born in Philadelphia February 24, 1935, Walt never again went back East.

His sense of wonder never left him, recalled Walt’s nephews, Scott, who adored his uncle. When asked why his uncle was so special to him, Scott replied, “Because he is just like me, a kid, only bigger. Scott still calls Walt his Wonder-Uncle.

After completing his military service, Walt Kaltmaier worked in the San Diego area for a company called Univar. He married and started a family with children Tracey and Kurt. Being Walt, he would sometimes take his work out of the office to sit far out on Point Loma in San Diego, simultaneously working and watching the whales frolic. The 1970s brought a transfer to Denver, a third child, Kimberly, a divorce, and a discovery of boating at Lake Powell.

While on assignment for Univar in Sterling, Colorado, Walt met Trina in a computer room. As luck would have it, it started snowing, highways were closed in all directions, and the two were snowed in together for three days, cementing a relationship that would culminate years later in marriage.

To be closer to his beloved Lake Powell, Walt and Trina moved to Page in 1980. They married in 1981 on the old golf course in Page. Of course, they honeymooned on a house boat on Lake Powell. Walt joined Reclamation in 1986 and enjoyed working as a computer specialist. He was 62.

**Bill Duncan**

**Secretly Running Glen Canyon Dam**

To many friends, **William H. Duncan** was fondly known as ‘Duncan;’ a name his wife gave him because of his red hair and freckles—characteristic of his Scottish heritage. He also was known as a talented, energetic, and problem-solving engineer and manager.

“In my career of 37 years of fixing machinery, I’ve met a lot of mechanical engineers,” said Hank Dhieux, mechanical supervisor at Glen Canyon Dam. “Bill was the best, absolutely unbelievable! When I had problems I’d call Bill—he’s been secretly keeping Glen Canyon Dam running for a long time. Bill was a great manager.”

“The emptiness we feel at Glen Canyon will never go away, Bill will always be missed,” said Dhieux.

Employed by Reclamation for 20 years, Bill Duncan was considered a leading authority in the operation and maintenance of hydroelectric powerplants not only by Reclamation but also by utility companies here and abroad. Until his recent assignment as manager of the Glen Canyon Field Division, he was employed as a mechanical engineer in Reclamation’s Denver office. He was a member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and served on several of their technical committees.

Bill, who was 46, is survived by Mim, his wife of 24 years, his parents, and two sisters. Bill and Mim enjoyed traveling, skiing, rollerblading, camping, boating on Lake Powell, and their dog Mattie. He also was an avid diver and fisherman. Because Bill and Mim spent 23 years in Pennsylvania and 22 years in Denver, they considered both places home.

Bill was born in Pennsylvania and graduated from Bucknell University in 1973 with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. He was a member of Theta Chi Fraternity. To honor Bill’s life in a special way, plant a tree in his memory or make a donation to the Humane Society in his name.
Tribute, sorrow, legacy, and rededication. Emotions and memories engulfed family, friends, and co-workers as the nation honored the eight Bureau of Reclamation workers who tragically lost their lives in the October 8 crash of a commercial aircraft in the rugged mountains of Colorado.

The Department’s memorial service on November 7 at the Marriott Courtyard Hotel in Page, Arizona, opened with a Reclamation-wide moment of silence led by Commissioner Eluid Martinez. After “America the Beautiful” was sung, individual tributes were presented by close friends and co-workers to honor each employee. Mike Woods, major of Page, Arizona, provided community comments.

Secretary Bruce Babbitt read a letter from President and Mrs. Clinton: “Hilary and I extend our heartfelt sympathy to the friends, families, and co-workers of the eight Bureau of Reclamation employees who lost their lives in the tragic plane crash.

“Jim Bloomfield, Bill Duncan, Dephina Holliman, Al Inman, Walt Kaltmaier, Jon Nees, Jeff Waite, and Catrina Wall represented public service at its finest. Through their contributions to the Colorado River Storage Project and other assignments during their careers with the Bureau of Reclamation, they dedicated their time, talents, and energy to make life better for their fellow Americans.

“They have left a rich legacy of achievement and service to our country that will continue to inspire all who knew them and worked with them. Our hearts go out to each of you, as well as the people of Montrose, Colorado, and Page, Arizona, as you now strive to cope with this devastating loss. We are keeping all of you in our thoughts and praying for your strength and comfort.”

Secretary Babbitt spoke of how extraordinarily close the Reclamation family is “and how much you care about each other. The ties in the Reclamation family are so much stronger and nurturing than they are in most places. This agency called the Bureau of Reclamation, which is people, which is you, has made it possible for all of us to live out here in this part of America and to put together the conditions of life on this rugged landscape.”

Secretary Babbitt also recognized how extremely hard it is to keep families together while working for an agency that is always moving on to work on different projects to improve life in the West. He said the commemorative fountain that will be restored at the Glen Canyon Dam Carl B. Hayden Visitor Center is an especially appropriate memorial.

Reclamation has established a memorial fund for the families of the eight employees who died in the plane crash. Contributions may be sent through February 1, 1998, to: Reclamation Memorial Fund, Exchange Credit Union, P.O. Box 11364, Salt Lake City, Utah 84117-0364. The fund is being administered by employees on a volunteer basis. There are no federal resources associated with the fund or its administration. Thank you for sharing in our expression of remembrance for our employees and their families.
The fountain at the visitor center is really a fountain about the water running through the land and running through our memories, our lives, our hearts, and our associations,” the Secretary said. “I would hope that in the years to come, all of you, and especially the children, will have the opportunity to go down on the banks of the eternal Colorado River and stand by the fountain and read the names and remember that the water that flows in that river, in their memory, through the fountain, is sacramental water of healing, salvation, and renewal.

“And I hope that in the years to come the children will remember that they can honor, and renew, and keep ever green the memory of these fine people by striving in their own lives to honor and follow the example that these splendid people have set.”

Upper Colorado Regional Director Charles Calhoun extended Reclamation’s deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and co-workers of Robert Armstrong, the pilot of the flight. “While I never met Robert, I have been as impressed with the words and memories expressed about his life as I am sure the people of Scenic Airlines are with the lives of our employees.”

Armstrong, 63, a resident of Phoenix, Arizona, had been flying with Scenic Airlines for ten years. The service concluded with the unveiling of two commemorative plaques and an artist’s rendering of what the memorial fountain will look like when it is completed this spring. The plaques were unveiled by the officers of the Glen Canyon Field Division Employees Association on behalf of all Reclamation employees. A reception was held at the visitor center at Glen Canyon Dam after the service.

Memorial Service

Service Opening

Mourning of Silence

Music Selection

Employee Tributes

William H. "Bill" Duncan
By Hank Dhiou

Allen E. "Al" Inman, Jr.
By Steven Janik

Jeffrey E. "Jeff" Wade
By Mike Heiman

James L. "Jim" Bloomfield
By Jeff Jones

Jon E. Nees
By John Wilkie

Despina D. "Des" Hollman
By Betty Lund

Walter A. "Walt" Kallman
By Bob Luedtke

Cristine M. Wall
By Kay Cohan

Community Comments

Department of the Interior Comments

Unveiling of Memorial Plaques

Conclusion

Assisting in the plaque unveiling are the officers of the Glen Canyon Field Division Employees Association

Allen Joes
President

David Corn
Vice President

Betty Lund
Secretary

Molly Hartwig
Treasurer

November 7, 1997

Secretary Babbitt

“I would hope that in the years to come, all of you, and especially the children, will have the opportunity to go down on the banks of the eternal Colorado River and stand by the fountain and read the names and remember that the water that flows in that river, in their memory, through the fountain, is sacramental water of healing, salvation, and renewal.”
Although the Bureau of Land Management’s Mill Creek site in Moab, Utah, is one of America’s premier mountain biking areas, the visitors spent their day at the recreational area working—clearing 3.5 acres of Russian Thistle, removing almost a rule of barbed wire fences, rebuilding a short trail, terracing and re-seeding gullied trails, and cleaning up an unauthorized campsite.

“No could feel that it was fun for the volunteers and energizing to the BLMers,” recalled Kate Kitchell, BLM’s Moab district manager. “It was just really neat to be in a group doing something positive out on the public lands!”

On that same day, ambitious volunteers at Prison Hill Recreation Area in Carson City, Nevada, constructed more than 3,000 feet of trail, installed 200 feet of fence, relocated a trail head, installed 300 feet of erosion control materials, and finished off the day installing trail signs and a kiosk.

It was all in a day’s work for the volunteers. But for BLM’s Arthur Callan, who helped coordinate activities at the site, it was an opportunity to build community support for the site’s role. “The volunteers gain an awareness and understanding of public lands and their inherent value, while establishing a sense of community pride and ownership for these lands,” said Callan.

Across America on September 27, more than 5,000 volunteers took work tools in hand and pitched in to protect the nation’s greatest natural treasure—its public lands. Volunteers at 29 sites helped to construct trails, rehabilitate picnic areas and other public places, build visitor kiosks, erect bridges, and stabilize stream, lake, and bay side areas.

The fourth National Public Lands Day was hosted by a partnership of the BLM, National Park Service, Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Foundation, Education and Training Foundation. The annual event encourages young adults, families, children, and seniors to join volunteer and educational activities linked to the public lands.

Since 1994, more than 13,000 volunteers have participated in the initiative. The idea was conceived by the BLM and Times Mirror Magazines to raise public awareness about the public lands and encourage volunteer support of those lands. This year, the BLM hosted volunteer projects on 15 sites and the National Park Service on three. Here is a sampling of their efforts:

Taking a walk back through history, volunteers at Pahreah Canyon in Kanab, Utah, refurbished the historic buildings of an old movie set. Then, they tackled the Kanab City Rifle Range, fixing picnic tables, restoring fire arm rests, disposing of old grills and fire rings, picking up litter, dismantling old corrals, and stabilizing firebreaks. The BLM also hosted a Boy Scout Camporee with seven merit badge workshops at the site.

Scurrying to beat the first snowfall, volunteers at the Campbell Tract in Anchorage, Alaska, built an amphitheater for summertime environmental education programs, installed winter trail signs for dog mushing, completed trail usage surveys, and participated in environmental education programs, including Lead a Rough Trail. At Cache Creek in Clear Lake, California, the day’s mission was to protect wildlife and be a part of history. Volunteers constructed an ‘elk-friendly’ fence, removed a disturbing fence, stabilized an archaeological site, and refurbished trails.

Far left, to enhance Prince William Forest Park’s lake shore—in Northern Virginia not far from the nation’s Capitol—the volunteers remove a rotted boat dock. At left, making the connection, volunteers complete a 140-foot bridge linking a trail between Rocky Mountain National Park and the Arapaho National Forest in Colorado. Below left, working by side, California, volunteers and BLM staff remove barbed wire, which is dangerous to local roaming elk, to prepare for the installation of an “elk-friendly” fence. Below, volunteers in Florida help to clean up BLM’s Jupiter Tract, one of the few BLM land holdings in the east.

Learning about leadership and volunteering, Boy Scouts under the supervision of an Eagle Scout candidate construct an amphitheater in front of BLM’s Campbell Creek Science Center in Anchorage, Alaska.
Stormdrain Graffiti Targets the Citizen Polluter—That’s Us Folks!

Lynn Holt, Public Affairs Specialist, Denver, Colorado

You may have seen these words, or something similar, stenciled near storm drains in your city. Six short words: “Dump no waste.” Most people don’t realize that enormous amounts of pollution come from the accumulated actions of individual citizens. Stormwater pollution, for example, is a major contributor to degraded water quality. This source includes road runoff—which carries oil, antifreeze, and other pollutants—as well as residential runoff such as household and garden chemicals.

This pollution—often referred to as nonpoint source pollution—runs through storm drains directly into rivers and, in some instances, into the oceans. And many people—unaware that storm sewers do not pass through water-treatment plants—consciously pour oil, paint, and other household chemicals down these drains. Even waste treatment plants are not usually designed to handle these chemicals. Pollution from stormdrains often exceed pollution from industrial sources (usually referred to as point-source pollution). But, unlike the more serious pollution from commercial farms, industrial plants, and construction sites, stormwater pollution is a problem that citizens—you and I—can correct.

So, what’s the answer? Prevention by education. Disposing properly of household chemicals. Bringing used motor oil to a recycling center. Washing the car before driving on the street. “It’s a dog fight that we are fighting now,” said Joe Wallace, regional storm-water coordinator in the Environmental Protection Agency’s Seattle office. “We used to think we were after this evil polluter. Now we’re finding that polluter is us.”

The Storm Drain Stenciling Program is one of the many projects managed by the Bureau of Reclamation’s Environmental Education Program in Denver. Kathie Marsh, Reclamation’s environmental education coordinator, launched this program in the spring of 1996 with a pilot project at Samuel Elementary School in southeast Denver. So far, the program has helped 12 elementary and middle schools in the Denver metro area. Several of Reclamation’s area offices also are participating.

A typical project begins with coordination between Marsh and a classroom teacher. The teacher prepares the students by helping them to study about storm water runoff before the actual event. On stenciling day, the students listen to a 20-minute presentation and, then, armed with stenciling gear that is provided by Reclamation, they stencil the curbs of storm drains located near their schools.

The students also are given large plastic bags to collect trash and debris along the receiving stream or river. By working with the storm drains and the receiving water, the students more readily understand the importance of source controls as a method of protecting the stream from pollution. “It’s amazing how much these children already know and care about the environment,” says Marsh. “Storm drain stenciling is fun, and the kids love doing it. They are eager to help their environment, and this is something they can do right in their own neighborhood.”

Women’s Rights National Historical Park

The staff at Women’s Rights National Historical Park made a special effort to recruit 200 hearing-impaired women this past summer. And both the visitors and the park’s interpretive program were richly rewarded. The visitors were leaving the 1997 Deaf Women United National Conference in nearby Rochester, New York, and made a day-long trip to the park, which is located in Seneca Falls.

Two American Sign Language interpreters were hired for the day with donation money collected at the park. With the interpreters along, NPS rangers provided guided tours, which included the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel that was the site of the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention—America’s first national assembly to address the social, cultural, educational, and political equality of women. The guests also visited the Suffrage Press Printshop that commemorates the historic role of Amelia Bloomer’s feminist press in Seneca Falls and provides an overview of how newspapers were printed in early 19th century America.

Several of the visitors remarked on the emotional quality of the Watterfall, an outdoor structure that bears the inscribed text of the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments, a document approved at the historic convention that proclaimed to the world that “all men and women are created equal.” A continuous flow of water cascades over the words. In the
Donald Reisser, superintendent of Haleakala National Park, has received the Sierra Club’s 1997 Distinguished Service Award, which honors individuals in public service who have shown a strong commitment to conservation. "Don Reisser is a dedicated public servant whose commitment to environmental protection has been inspirational," said Adam Werbach, president of the Sierra Club—"the largest grassroots environmental organization in the United States. Reisser has been superintendent of Haleakala since 1988. Under his leadership, the park has expanded its resources management and research programs to preserve imperiled native Hawaiian plants and animals. He has directed the protection of park ecosystems from the increasing threats of non-natives such as goats, pigs, alien insects and plants, and educated visitors about these problems. As park superintendent and a state Natural Reserve System Commissioner, Reisser has worked to protect pristine resources of eastern Maui watershed lands. He has been a persistent voice in warning to tourism managers that a comprehensive Leave No Trace education program and management plan is needed to help visitors enjoy the exquisite scenic beauty and wildlife of these natural wonders, rather than sitting in traffic jams looking for a place to park. Making the parks more pleasant and enriching is a major goal of recently unveiled mass-transit plans for these parks. Secretary Babbitt said in announcing plans that will get visitors to Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Zion National Parks out of their cars and onto trains and shuttle buses to bring them to these popular but increasingly crowded wonders. Babbitt said plans will only be successful if the parks can make more efficient use of the federal resources and will not require an increase in admission fees, Babbitt explained. The new transportation systems will be funded from existing federal transportation programs, demonstration fees, state and private grants would fund the project. A service contract will provide for the system’s operation and maintenance. Annual operating costs would be about $2 million.
The agreement to display Saint-Gaudens’ work of art in Washington—the first collaboration between the National Park Service and the National Gallery of Art—provides that the National Gallery will offer educational programming about the monument, including guest lectures and scholarly symposiums, as well as ongoing presentations at the gallery for visitors and students. The terms of the ten-year agreement provide for renewing the loan.

When Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) began work on the commission in 1883, he was already nationally known. His monument to Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, unveiled in New York’s Madison Square Park in 1881, had met with great acclaim. The Shaw Memorial took on even greater significance for Saint-Gaudens, who incorporated great detail and emotion into the design. Soldiers’ faces were individualized, sculpted from live models. In a labor of love, Saint-Gaudens worked on the relief for 14 years before it was unveiled on Boston Common in 1897.

Even then, however, the sculptor was not satisfied with the work and he continued to refine elements of the relief for the following three years. This refined version, which was completed in 1900, is the cast now on display at the National Gallery of Art. It was earlier exhibited at the Paris World Exposition in 1900, and at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, the following year. It was shown at the Albright Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo for 15 years. This cast was later acquired by the Saint-Gaudens Memorial and displayed at the artist’s home and studio in Cornish, New Hampshire, from 1959-1996. The site became part of the National Park Service in 1965. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site features not only his studios, but also a large collection of fine art.

Best known for its virgin stand of towering coastal redwoods, Muir Woods National Monument also is gaining notoriety as an important observation area for Monarch butterflies and for spearheading efforts to preserve that species’ habitat in Northern California. For ten years, Muir Woods park ranger Mia Monroe has worked with the California-based Monarch Program and local volunteers at the park site and other areas in Northern California.

Mia heads up tagging and monitoring efforts to determine the butterflies’ arrival and dispersal times, and their clustering habits, use and impact on the site, and loss due to parasites and predators. Mia’s program provides educational materials to local landowners such as a booklet she co-authored entitled Habitat Management for Monarchs in California, which was published by the Xerces Society. She also coordinates a corps of volunteers who work in local schools to develop butterfly gardens and introduce butterfly biology into school curriculums. Mia accompanied a group to Mexico last year to discuss Monarch habitat management, development of educational materials, and training of young people to serve as habitat interpreters and researchers. Mia returned to Mexico in November to participate in an International Conference on Monarch Butterflies. Mia Monroe can be reached at (415) 388-2796.

Because of its fragile nature, however, the refined plaster cast was gradually deteriorating. It was decided to complete a bronze cast of the plaster while preserving it. The Saint-Gaudens Memorial foundation, in partnership with the Park Service, raised $250,000 to produce the new bronze. The NPS North East Region Cultural Resource Center’s Conservation branch at Lowell, Massachusetts, coordinated much of the effort. Brigid Sullivan, chief conservator, with Carol Warner, conservator, went beyond expectations in overseeing the project.

Following its dismantling in August 1996, the plaster cast underwent a conservation process and molds were made from which a bronze memorial was cast in the spring of 1997. Measuring fourteen-feet high and sixteen-feet wide, the bronze was unveiled on July 13 in the gardens at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site, in the same location where the plaster relief was exhibited for almost forty years before being loaned to the National Gallery of Art.

Walk through the doors of history and become a part of Maryland’s signer to the Declaration of Independence at Habre de Venture—the home of Thomas Stone. The mansion, built in 1714 and restored this year, was opened to the public during a Grand Opening and Festival on November 1-2. The park is open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Festivities will include tours of the mansion, colonial arts and crafts, and music. Thomas Stone became a well respected lawyer and a prominent political figure important in the development of Maryland and the United States. The public affairs contact is Edie Shean-Hammond, (617) 223-5199.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park’s Nene (Hawaiian Goose) monitoring and recovery program is underway. The Nene is listed as endangered by the state of Hawaii and the federal government. Hawaii Volcanoes has about 200 of the birds in its population. Volunteers, trained by park staff, will monitor the Nene for the entire breeding season, beginning in early October and lasting through mid-March. Because most of the birds are already banded, monitoring relies heavily on repeated band sightings. To assess reproductive success, volunteers will also look for nests and broods. Recovery actions will include various measures to enhance recruitment of wild birds into the park’s population.

The methods include predator control in key nesting and brooding areas, maintenance of a predator-resistant open-topped pen in which some free-flying Nene nest, and the provision of supplemental feed to wild goslings in one or two locations. Volunteers also will radiotrack goslings to help determine why young Nene suffer high mortality in one brooding area in the park. The data collected will be used to calculate the season’s recruitment (the number of goslings surviving to fledge) and reproductive success, and to estimate population size and growth rate. Collectively, these figures are important indicators of the population’s health, which allow the park to assess the success of its current recovery work and to tailor future management efforts where the need is most critical. The park contact is Darcy Hui, (808) 985-6092.
Oceans are vital to life on Earth. From providing food, minerals, and other natural resources to enabling global trade, communications, and recreational opportunities, oceans play a major role in our lives. They affect us every day and our activities constantly affect them. And though oceans may be limitless, they need our care and protection.

The United States will use the Year of the Ocean to promote public awareness and understanding of the value of the oceans and the marine environment as resources for sustainable development.

The U.S. initiative will promote public awareness and understanding of the value of the oceans and marine resources to the national welfare and the need for exploration, sustainable use, and conservation of ocean resources for future generations.

The Minerals Management Service is playing a major role in the Year of the Ocean campaign as part of the nation's ongoing effort to effectively balance offshore resource development with environmental protection. In recognition of MMS's role in ocean research and resource management, NOAA's Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, James Baker, has asked MMS Director Cynthia Quinn, to select federal representatives on the U.S. Steering Committee for the campaign.

The committee will provide oversight and guidance for U.S. Year of the Ocean activities, including a possible White House Conference on the Oceans in 1998.

“We want people to fully understand our contribution to the Year of the Ocean campaign,” said Aenn Turgason, chief scientist for MMS. “For example, a common misconception is that one of the chief causes of ocean pollution is offshore oil spills, which in actuality, these spills contribute only a small percentage to the environmental problems facing oceans.”

The U.S. Outer Continental Shelf produces about one million barrels of oil a day, and over the last 20 years, less than two percent of the amount produced offshore was spilled, Turgason points out. The MMS is dedicated to helping industry maintain clean and safe offshore operations.

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“As we enter the Year of the Ocean,” says MMS Director Quarteman, “we will highlight the campaign’s objectives and goals in our education and outreach efforts. Working with NOAA is natural since it manages the living resources of the ocean and we manage the mineral resources.”

The U.S. educational campaign will focus on several ocean themes and cross-cutting issues. The themes include National Security, Maritime Transportation, Environmental Quality, Ocean Resources, and security. Recreation, the Tourism, and Weather, Climate, and Natural Hazards. The major issues include Science and Technology, Legal Framework, and Management of Ocean Areas, Uses, and Resources.

Continuing Environmental Studies

Gulf Whales

The Gulf of Mexico Outer Continental Shelf Region is conducting a study on the at-sea distribution, relative abundance, behavior, and movements of whales in the Gulf, with particular emphasis on the eastern Gulf of Mexico planning area. The research also will relate marine mammal distribution to oceanic features such as upwelling. The purpose of the study is to ensure that offshore exploration does not jeopardize protected species.

Bowhead Whales

Their diminished numbers and ice habitat make the study of bowhead whales difficult. Since 1978, MMS has been conducting aerial surveys that identify whale distribution and potential oil spills. Aerial surveys can be conducted in any weather, with no dependence on the presence of the endangered bowhead.

MMS recently awarded a four-year $2.4 million contract to LGL Limited Environmental Research Associates to provide information about bowhead whale feeding in the eastern Alaskan Beaufort Sea. Data from this study will help the agency and local communities assess whether future oil and gas exploration in the area would have adverse effects on bowhead whale feeding. Bowhead whales are part of the baleen family which includes the largest of all living animals—the blue whale. Some baleen whales travel over entire ocean basins in a matter of months.

Ring Seal Survey

The Monitoring Key Marine Mammal Study is designed to develop and implement a protocol for monitoring the distribution and abundance of ring seals off the coast of northern Alaska. Ring seals have been identified as a keystone species in the Arctic marine environment. They are being studied as indicators of the marine environment in terms of pollution. For example, if contaminants are found in plankton, which fish eat, the contaminant can find its way into the seal’s system. The study is in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the MMS, Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, and the North Slope Borough.

Seabird Surveys

Long term studies of coastal birds along the Pacific coast where oil production exists continue. The goal of the in-house research program of MMS-Pacific Outer Continental Shelf Region is to provide the agency with up-to-date information on those species of birds which might be affected by offshore oil development. Because seals—like eiders, pelicans, and gulls—are so vulnerable to contact with oil, the effect of an accidental oil spill on bird populations is a major concern. In order to gain a greater understanding of the numbers, distribution, and seasonal patterns of the seabirds that occur in waters off southern California, the Pacific Region is conducting a series of semi-monthly aerial surveys in the Santa Barbara Channel and Santa Maria Basins. These studies identify important habitats of marine birds known to be sensitive to oil spill impacts and the information gained will be compared with earlier data to detect long-term changes in the numbers and distribution of key species.

“Look Who’s Swimming in the Gulf

Sperm whales—once thought a rare visitor to the gulf, have been found in increasing numbers. Frater’s dolphins and melon-headed whales, both practically unknown in the gulf, now occur in warm waters. In the deep waters of the gulf, pantropical spotted dolphins are seen in large schools, and though once scarce, pygmy and dwarf sperm whales are now quite common.

MMS-funded and supported studies help to unlock the mystery of whale and dolphin abundance in the gulf. These studies continue to establish the migratory patterns of these gentle giants—and pygmies—of the sea.
Scientists Gear Up for El Niño

Diane Noserale

From the West Coast to South Florida, USGS is gearing up as part of the scientific front line in studying and reducing the impact of El Niño—the dramatic change in regional weather patterns induced by a shift in the water and weather circulations of the tropical Pacific.

“El Niño is a reminder of the importance of keeping our science guard up against real-time hazards,” said USGS Acting Director Mark Schafer during October 31 testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Water and Power. “As earth and biological scientists, we are concerned that El Niño may increase the number and intensity of storms, triggering floods, landslides, coastal erosion, and damage to fragile ecosystems. These changes may occur as early as October in an El Niño year, but typically are strongest in winter and early spring.

“We can’t forecast exactly what El Niño will do, but I’ve asked USGS scientists to be ready,” Schafer explained. “As just part of our front line, the USGS is working to ensure that stream gauges in the West and across the country will be fully operational during extreme conditions should they develop.

“We now monitor streams for flooding at nearly 7,000 stations across the country,” said Dr. Robert Hirsch, USGS chief hydrologist. “Half of our stations are equipped to transmit information in real time to emergency management and warning agencies such as the National Weather Service and the Army Corps of Engineers. The data are also available to the public via the World Wide Web. Our purpose is to provide data so that the public has the earliest possible warning of an impending flood.

“As vital as the automated equipment is, we have learned from past floods that our technicians in the field remain the critical link to ensure that the best possible information is available for making decisions that will affect lives and property,” Hirsch said.

Efforts to monitor and reduce El Niño’s impact include:

- Communicating historical information on streamflows during past El Niños to water managers in the West. Historical data provides the earliest clue on where flooding may occur.


The San Francisco Bay, Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, northern New Mexico, Sacramento, and the Central Appalachians will be monitored. About 600 miles of the Pacific coast between Point Grenville, Washington, and San Diego, California, will be surveyed to monitor coastal erosion that may threaten lives and property.

USGS will document El Niño’s effects in the Everglades and South Florida. El Niño may bring heavy rains to South Florida during what is normally a dry period, inundating the Everglades and possibly disrupting biological life cycles. When heavy rains cause large amounts of freshwater to flow into Florida Bay and other South Florida estuaries, the salinity changes abruptly, which may harm the estuaries’ aquatic life. Also, special response teams are on call 24 hours a day to ensure that topographic and special maps are in the hands of state and federal emergency coordinators within hours of a flood or landslide.

In PLW’s next issue: The Bureau of Reclamation readsies for control and storage for El Niño’s expected record runoff.

Natural Hazards Info: Just in Time

Bill Miller

To help meet the ever-increasing need for hazards information, the USGS has developed a National Hazards Information Center, known informally as the ‘situation room,’ the center is a laboratory that uses real-time data from instrument networks, derived products from classified sources, public satellite data, and standard USGS information products.

It uses these sources to create integrated analyses of hazards information for ‘just in time’ delivery to decision makers and the public on natural hazards such as wildfires, earthquakes, floods, landslides, volcanoes, and wildlife disease outbreaks. The facility will also operate as a laboratory for data integration, analysis, modeling, and technology research and will support ongoing development of USGS hazard data processing and delivery systems.

The Natural Hazards Information Center aims to bring a broad range of integrated disaster information to the people who need it, just in time.

New ClearingHouse For Biological Data

Anne Frondorf

The USGS Biological Resources Division has initiated a new Internet-based clearinghouse that can be searched to locate biological information from many sources. “We are very pleased to offer this new service to the public, resource managers and scientists, and anyone else interested in locating existing sources of biological data and information,” said Dennis B. Fenn, Chief Biologist, in announcing the clearinghouse.

“This is a great opportunity not only for us to help get the results of USGS biological science out to those who can use the data and information, but also for us to provide a tool that our partners and cooperators can use to help share their own data and information,” said Fenn. This clearinghouse is part of the National Biological Information Infrastructure. NBII, which is a cooperative effort led by the USGS to increase access to biological information from federal and state government agencies, universities, libraries, and private groups.

Internet users can search through the NBII Clearinghouse using the name of the investigator or author who collected the information, subject-matter keywords (including taxonomic group), and spatial coordinates to locate the study area. The database also describes how and where the information was collected; who to contact for more information; and how to access the information. The NBII Clearinghouse is available on the World Wide Web at: http://www.nbii.gov/clearinghouse.html
Celebration. At right, Chief Biologist Dennis B. Finn supplies a shovel of dirt to a newly planted maple tree at the USGS National Generta as part of the celebration.

Above, Patricia J. Beneke, assistant secretary for Water and Science, offers congratulatory remarks at the anniversary celebration. At right, Chief Biologist Dennis B. Finn supplies a shovel of dirt to a newly planted maple tree at the USGS National Generta as part of the celebration.

Chesapeake Map Helps Managers

Rebecca Philipp

A poster produced from satellite images of the Chesapeake Bay watershed will aid a multi-state effort to restore and manage the bay's resources. USGS scientists will use the image of the entire 64,000-square-mile drainage basin of the Chesapeake Bay to provide a snapshot of recent surface conditions, including vegetation, that can be compared with historical and future images to help produce a report card of progress or setbacks in meeting resource management goals.

“Because the image can provide a key to at least a dozen vegetation types and other land-cover features, it will help us work with other agencies to develop methods for monitoring progress on changes along rivers and streams,” said Scott Phillips, USGS Chesapeake Bay Program coordinator. “And we hope to work with other agencies to further develop methods that relate land-use change to ecosystem change in the bay watershed and the bay,” said Phillips.

As a federal land-management agency with responsibilities in all 50 states, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will use the Chesapeake Bay poster map in solving complex natural resource management issues in the six-state bay watershed,” said Jerry Griswold, Chesapeake Bay program coordinator for the National Resources Conservation Service. “The poster map is also a graphic reminder of the relevance of the Chesapeake Bay and its resources to the thousands of people that live in the watershed.”

The USGS also produced the poster as an outreach tool for the public to better understand that activities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed may have an impact on the water quality and living resources of the bay. The image mosaic, composed of Landsat thematic mapper scenes collected from 1990 through 1994, will be the most complete and current basin-wide image to date of the entire Chesapeake Bay.

Copies of the map are available for $4 each, plus a $3.50 handling charge, from the USGS Branch of Information Services, Box 25286, Denver, CO 80225. Credit card orders may be faxed to (303) 202-4693. For more information on ordering call (800) 435-7627. For more about USGS science in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, check the World Wide Web at http://chesapeake.usgs.gov/chesbay

Water Exhibit Debuts

Toni Johnson

Our Susquehanna River: We All Live Upstream is a new exhibit that was cooperatively developed by the USGS and the Museum of Scientific Discovery in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It allows visitors to investigate water quality and quantity through four hands-on stations. The stations demonstrate how water data on streams in the Susquehanna River basin are collected and used. The exhibit also includes a map covered with fiber optic lights that pinpoint USGS water testing stations.

USGS News Via Listservers

The USGS has set up several listservers, modeled after those of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that will automatically provide users the latest news releases, bulletins, and other information from the Office of Outreach. The listservers are organized by topic: water, geologic hazards, biological, mapping, new products. To subscribe to any list, send mail to listproc@listserver.usgs.gov. In the body of the message write: subscribe (name of listserver)(your name). Example: subscribe water- pr Joe Smith. You may subscribe to more than one list; just be sure to list each separately. List servers are: water-pr, geologic-hazards- pr, biological-pr, mapping-pr, products-pr, and lecture-pr.

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Subscribers will not be able to reply or send their own messages to the lists. The list servers are designed as a ‘one way street’ for the rapid dissemination of information on the USGS and its activities, rather than for gathering feedback. Each item posted will have a point of contact to whom questions should be directed. Comments or questions about the listserver should be directed to Karen Wood, e-mail: kwood@usgs.gov, or phone: (703) 648-1447.

Happy Birthday, New USGS

Patti Beneke, assistant secretary for Water and Science, joined USGS officials, local political leaders, and employees on October 30 in celebration of the first birthday of the new USGS.

“The issues that we are facing today are complex—marked by the tension between growth and conservation, constricted by reduced financial and people resources—and they demand that we be opportunistic in our search for solutions,” said Beneke. “We must have at our hand the full complement of scientific and technical expertise that the new USGS promises to deliver.”

Her remarks recognized that USGS became a unique organization with the merger one year ago of biological science from the National Biological Service and minerals information component of the U.S. Bureau of Mines.

“The new USGS is a stronger USGS, better prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The minerals information expertise from the former Bureau of Mines and the biological sciences expertise from the former National Biological Service complement the traditional strengths in geology, cartography, and hydrology which have been the backbone of the historical USGS,” said Beneke.

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Wildlife researchers are constantly striving to find better ways to study the movements, habitat use, behavior, and survival of animals without adversely affecting the animals themselves. Recent advancements in electronics, driven by commercial developments in computer, cellular phone, and satellite technology, have led to new tracking and monitoring techniques for wildlife studies.

This technological development was the topic of discussion at a Forum on Wildlife Telemetry that included about 50 oral presentations and 50 poster demonstrations by biologists of the USGS and The Wildlife Society. The meeting brought together more than 300 biologists and electronics experts from 19 countries and 44 states to Snowmass, Colorado from Sept. 21-23.

“We wanted to bring research biologists and electronics experts together, so they could share their knowledge and experiences in different areas of wildlife ecology and technology,” said Jane Austin, one of the forum’s co-chairs.

Austin and co-chair Pam Pietz, both from the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center in Jamestown, North Dakota, were pleased with the breadth of participation in the forum. More than 70 federal scientists attended from the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Commerce, and Energy. The Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, National Park Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also were represented.

In addition, the forum featured presentations by 300 scientists from the USGS, Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Commerce, and Energy. The forum featured presentations by 300 scientists from the USGS, Interior, Agriculture, Defense, Commerce, and Energy.

A three year project to explore use of nonintrusive genetic techniques to monitor Glacier National Park’s grizzly bear population will begin in 1998. USGS staff stationed in Glacier will assist in a pilot study addressing one aspect of these techniques.

This past summer, park rangers and volunteers surveyed 99 percent of the park’s maintained trail system and collected approximately 450 bear scats and hair from 500 rub trees. Next year, more samples will be collected and a genetic lab will begin generating DNA and establishing DNA fingerprints for each of the samples.

If these new methods prove effective, USGS staff will provide the National Park Service with baseline data on the grizzly population and, more importantly, protocols for long-term monitoring of the grizzly bear population trends.

Researchers presented techniques applicable to a wide range of animals, said Austin. “There were evaluations of transmitters and tracking methods for all kinds of birds, terrestrial and aquatic mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and even insects.” A wide variety of technologies were covered, as researchers demonstrated systems that involved satellite tracking, global positioning systems (GPS), harmonic radar, LORAN-C, and hyperbolic navigation.

USGS scientists have long been involved in the development and use of radio transmitters to track wildlife. Studies using radio telemetry techniques have provided valuable data on habitat needs, movements, behavior, and survival of wild animals—data which cannot be obtained by other methods.

Researchers have used telemetry to study polar bear movements across the Arctic, habitat needs and survival of nesting ducks, migration routes of greese and hawks, interactions of foxes and coyotes, and the habitat use and movements of endangered species such as spotted owls, giant garter snakes, and manatees.

“Despite these successes, telemetry techniques still have many limitations,” said Pietz. “We hope that interactions among biologists and engineers at the forum will lead to improved research tools and increased research opportunities.” Abstracts of papers that were presented may be found at the Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center’s website: http://www.npwrc.org

Pam Pietz can be reached at (701) 253-5505.
Open Forum Rulemaking for Controversial Issues

Director Karpan recently announced a new approach to developing rules for OSM’s most controversial issues, beginning with redesign of the ownership and control rules that form the basis of the agency’s permit-block sanction against coal mine operators responsible for uncorrected violations of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act.

“What we intend to establish is a completely open forum for rulemaking—one that involves all interested parties at the very earliest stages of the process, way before OSM decides what goes into a proposed rule,” Karpan said. “The idea is to reach out to everyone who needs to be involved and everybody who’d like to have a say. It’s essential that we don’t overlook good ideas anywhere they might come from.”

Karpan welcomed good ideas from OSM’s state partners, the coal industry, environmental groups, and the public. “That way we can develop regulations that are legal, effective, and fair, and that will stand up to litigation and survive court scrutiny,” she said. “I decided on the ownership and control rules for the first test of this new approach because those rules and the computerized Applicant Violator System that implements them have been controversial and beset by litigation for a decade or more.”

Karpan pointed out that OSM issued interim final regulations covering ownership and control, the permit application process, and improvidently issued permits on April 21, 1997, in response to a federal appeals court ruling that invalidated previous rules. In issuing those rules, OSM acknowledged they were intended to be interim and promised to seek public comment on any subsequent proposed regulatory changes. Now, OSM is seeking to involve the public in advance of developing a proposed rule.

During a press conference at OSM headquarters in Washington, Karpan described topics and regulatory provisions identified thus far by a team of Interior Department employees to illustrate the scope of the issues being explored in the rulemaking.

Written comments and requests for further information, including copies of concept/issue papers, should be directed to Earl Bandy, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, AVS Office, Lexington, Kentucky 40503, telephone: 303 614-9748, E-mail: ebandy@osmre.gov. The concept/issue paper is also available on the OSM World Wide Web at: http://www.osmre.gov

Hudson Contamination May Threaten Nesting and Migratory Bird Species

Fred Causick

In Washington Irving’s The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, accounts of a headless horseman caused concern among Dutch farmers in a portion of the Hudson River Valley. Today, there is growing concern among the valley’s residents that the alleged clean-up of their once storied and magnificent but now PCB-laced river is posing a risk to hundreds of bird species as well as to fish and wildlife resources.

River bottom sediments in a 200-mile section of the river are highly contaminated from pollution by the General Electric Corporation, especially from factories in the upper portion of the river near Ft. Edward and Hudson Falls. An estimated 1.1 million pounds of PCBs were released into this stretch by two General Electric plants between 1946 and 1977.

The area is recognized as one of the most highly PCB-contaminated ecosystems in North America. The river’s entire 315 miles, from Hudson Falls, New York, to The Battery in New York City, was declared a Superfund Site in 1983 by the Environmental Protection Agency. The flock of most Hudson River fish exceeds the Food and Drug Administration’s PCB safety limit of two parts per million. Amazingly, a PCB level of 71 ppm was found in the fat of one young eagle killed by a train near the Hudson River—the PCB level was high enough to qualify the carcass as hazardous waste.

Yet scientists at EPA and General Electric are at odds over clean-up strategies. At the same time, Congress is debating the future of the 17-year-old group of clean-up laws known as “Superfund.” In the meantime, the Hudson’s fish and wildlife may be increasingly at risk. In a study begun in 1994 and completed this year, fish and wildlife biologist Anne Secord determined that tree swallow nestlings and eggs along the upper Hudson River have the highest concentration of PCBs ever recorded for the species.

Presentation of these results seems to have rekindled an intense debate on the extent to which the river’s contaminants may be affecting not only fish, such as striped bass and the endangered shortnose sturgeon, but also the 143 bird species known to use the river for nesting or migration, including the federally threatened bald eagle. An estimated 40 bald eagles regularly spend the winter fishing along the Hudson; two pairs have built nests repeatedly. Yet either breeding did not occur or eggs laid did not hatch—until this year. Defying what apparently are very high odds, one single chick was hatched in 1997. This news has raised some hope and focused attention on the inability of the other pair to reproduce successfully. Can a young eagle survive on a diet of mostly contaminated fish from the PCB-laced river?

The concerns of Hudson Valley residents were amplified during a September 25 visit to the refuge by the Secretary of the Interior. At a briefing along the upper Hudson River near Ft. Edward and Hudson Falls, the Secretary was joined by a delegation of Secretary Babbitt to the river’s bank in Columbia County, New York. At a briefing for the national as well as regional news media, the Secretary was joined by a conservation group that included the Hudson River Valley residents and a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition to the new facility

Salton Sea Staff Honored

Senator Diane Feinstein and Congressman Sonny Bono honored the Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge, a staff with letters of Special Congressional Recognition at the dedication of the new wildlife field hospital on Oct. 16. State Senator David G. Kelley also presented a California State Senate Certificate of Recognition at the ceremony. The awards recognize heroic efforts by the refuge staff to respond to avian botulism disease outbreaks on the Salton Sea in 1996 and 1997. The new wildlife field hospital will make such response easier in the future.

The dedication of the $93,000 facility was a bittersweet occasion. Thanks to contributions of materials and labor from CalEnergy, Granite Construction, Imperial Irrigation District, and the California Waterfowl Association, the refuge now has an efficient and functional facility to treat sick birds. At the same time, building such a permanent facility acknowledges that fish and bird disease outbreaks will continue to plague southern California’s Salton Sea into the foreseeable future. An estimated 20,000 birds died from avian botulism at Salton Sea in 1996, including more than 1,200 endangered brown pelicans. More than 1,000 sick brown and white pelicans were treated at the refuge before being transferred to a wildlife rehabilitator for long-term care.

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The United States’ IBA program was created by the International Council for Bird Preservation, now known as BirdLife International, in the mid-1980s. The designation of IBAs is one component of the Partners in Flight program, a consortium of federal and state agencies and non-government organizations formed to address the needs of migratory birds. The goal is to identify those sites that contain vulnerable, threatened, or endangered bird species or large concentrations of seabirds, waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, waders, or migratory land birds.

Once identified as IBAs, these critical habitat areas are expected to benefit from increased public awareness and enhanced habitat protection and management. The process of identifying IBAs also helps build partnerships and cooperation among ornithologists, birdwatchers, private landowners, and state and federal agencies. More than 3,000 sites worldwide have been designated IBAs by BirdLife International. In areas like the United States, it is being organized for similar designation. Both state and global IBAs have been identified; state sites may contain bird species threatened in a state or locally while global sites, such as the Upper Mississippi River and Trempealeau national wildlife refuges, are important to bird species worldwide.
Director Jamie Rappaport Clark has appointed Sam D. Hamilton the new director of the Service’s Southeast Region, headquartered in Atlanta. As regional director, Hamilton will oversee Service operations in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

“Throughout his career, Sam Hamilton has shown outstanding professionalism and leadership in dealing with some of the more difficult conservation issues we face,” said Clark in making her October 8 announcement. “He has served in some of our hot spots and won the respect of wildlife conservation professionals and state and local leaders who have worked with him.”

Hamilton’s most recent position was as the Southeast Region’s geographic assistant regional director responsible for refuges, hatcheries, and field offices in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Ross Adams Named Southeast Director Vicki Boatwright

Ross Adams, a 23-year veteran of the Service, is the new manager at Illinois River National Wildlife and Fish Refuges, headquartered at Havana, Illinois. Adams will manage this complex of refuge lands, which stretches along 120 miles of the Illinois River and includes Chautauqua, Emiquon, and Meredosia National Wildlife Refuges. The Illinois River refuges encompass about 10,700 acres and provide important habitat for waterfowl and other migratory birds.

Adams comes to Illinois River from Mark Twain National Wildlife Refuge in Quincy, Illinois, where he served as refuge biologist. He started as a biologist for the Federal Aid program and later moved to Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge in southern Illinois. His tenure also includes stints as manager at Mark Twain’s Anna Mad Via District in Missouri, and at Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in Ohio.

At Illinois River, Adams will oversee completion of habitat restoration on Lake Chautauqua, habitat acquisition and restoration at Emiquon refuge, and development of a comprehensive management plan for the refuge complex. Adams began his duties at Illinois River October 27.

Ross Adams Chief at Illinois River Refuges Georgia Parham

Robert Steiner, a veteran California wildlife artist, is the winner of the 1998-99 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, better known as the Duck Stamp. His acrylic portrait of a male Barrow’s goldeneye was chosen from 379 other entries in a Service-sponsored Nov. 6 contest to design the stamp for the next year.

“I did have a good feeling about this piece,” said Steiner when contacted at his San Francisco studio. “I just put the earlier version of this acrylic that placed third two years ago up in front of me and asked myself, ‘How can I improve on that?’ I was actually a little surprised at how much improving I was able to do.”

Steiner is a professional artist who owns his own print publishing company and specializes in waterfowl and upland game bird stamps. He has designed 41 state duck stamps, a number of Barrow’s goldeneyes.

Barrow’s Goldeneye Taps Competition Janet L. Miller

The female has a brownish head, white neck and belly, mottled gray back and wings, and yellow bill. As the name suggests, the eyes of both male and female are yellow-gold. The species is found chiefly in Alaska and western Canada. Breeding areas also include the Cascade Mountains of Washington, Oregon, and California and the Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming Rockies. In the West, they winter along the Pacific Coast from the Aleutians to San Francisco and in the East, along the coasts of southwestern Greenland, Newfoundland, and New England.

Barrow’s goldeneyes usually nest in tree cavities, sometimes as high as 50 feet above the ground, and feed primarily on insects, mollusks, and crustaceans. This is the first time the Barrow’s goldeneye will appear on a Duck Stamp. This year, artists could depict black ducks, Barrow’s goldeneyes, or mottled ducks. Artists are limited to particular species so that, by the year 2002, all North American waterfowl species will have appeared on a Duck Stamp.

Kevin Adams named Southeast Director.

Kevin Adams, a 21-year veteran of federal wildlife law enforcement, is the new chief of the agency’s Division of Law Enforcement. “Kevin Adams brings a successful record as a special agent, experience with complex international investigations, and demonstrated leadership skills to his new position,” said Director Clark. “He understands the importance of law enforcement to the sound management of the Nation’s fish and wildlife resources and its vital role in international conservation efforts.”

“We will continue the Service’s long tradition of working with state, Federal, and Tribal natural resource agencies to protect our trust species,” Adams said. “We must also strengthen our cooperative efforts with foreign governments to conserve global wildlife resources.”

Urban to Lead Caribbean Refuge Complex Duane Hawkins

The Fish and Wildlife Service has named Val Kevin Urban the new project leader of its Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex. As project leader, Urban will manage the entire Caribbean complex, comprised of seven refuges: Buck Island, Cabo, Culebra, Deschecho, Laguna Cartagena, Green Cay and Sandy Point National Wildlife Refuges. Sandy Point has the largest sea turtle nesting site under U.S. jurisdiction.

An employee of the Service for almost eight years, Urban has served as deputy project leader at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge near Tallahassee, Florida, for the past five years. He began his career with the Service in 1999 as a refuge operations specialist at Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge in Chiefland, Florida.

Working With America Janet L. Miller

The Service is working with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing to develop a new self-adhesive, single-issue Federal Duck Stamps to launch the new format on a three-year trial basis beginning July 1, 1998. Both the single issue format and the present 30-gammed stamps-per-pane configuration will be available during the trial. For more information, call Anita M. Nogueria at (202) 219-9822.

The northern population of the bog turtle (Glyptemys muhlenbergii) has been listed as threatened throughout its range—New York and Massachusetts south to Maryland. The southern bog turtle, which is found from southern Virginia to northern Georgia, was listed as threatened by similarity of appearance to provide added protection to its northern cousins.

Bog turtle habitat was not designated to present an increase in collection. The listing took place on Nov. 4.
Researching and understanding the marine environment that the MMS is charged with protecting is a vital necessity. That critical need has been an MMS priority since the Service was first charged with the responsibility of ensuring that offshore oil and gas development is conducted in an environmentally safe manner.

“Because the environment we study lies underwater,” said Les Dauterive, dive master for the Gulf of Mexico Region, “sometimes the most cost effective way to achieve our goal is to put on a SCUBA tank and go down for a look.”

For the past 20 years MMS scientists and divers have been doing just that and the results have been impressive. Among them, significant biological features have been protected, safety issues have been reported, and historic shipwrecks have been discovered. “And money has been saved both for industry and tax payers,” Dauterive added.

The MMS scientific dive team is a group of diver-scientists who provide the Region with scientific information through underwater observation, photo and video documentation, and other forms of scientific data gathering. Team members conduct diving operations for geoscientific research, sea-floor monitoring, historic shipwreck identification, and rigs-to-reef assessment.

“Some of the older production platforms have been standing in the Gulf of Mexico for twenty and thirty years,” Dauterive explained. “We’re working with state governments to allow the oil industry, in about ten percent of the cases, to leave part of their decommissioned structures in place so as not to destroy the marine community that has grown on it over the years.”

Rigs-To-Reef began in the Gulf of Mexico when Exxon relocated a structure from offshore Louisiana to an artificial reef site off the Florida coast. Since then more than 100 Rigs-To-Reef sites have been developed in the Gulf in order to enhance marine habitat and fisheries.

Another significant achievement of the dive team has been protecting the Flower Garden Banks—a National Marine Sanctuary in the Gulf of Mexico. The Department of Interior, having been charged with protecting the Banks, has been working with MMS to develop a management plan. “We have played an important role as inspectors for long-term monitoring studies, ensuring that protective measures are effective,” said Jack Irion, lead scientists for sea floor monitoring. The Flower Garden Banks are home to more than 130 species of fish.

In addition to Dauterive, dive-team members include: Dr. Ann Bull, senior environmental scientist; Dr. Jim Kendall, chief of environmental studies for the Region; Dr. Jack Irion and Rik Anuskiewicz, marine archaeologists and lead scientist for the region’s Sea Floor Monitoring Project; Joe Christopher, chief of environmental assessment; Terry Dempre, senior geophysicist; and Dr. James Lima, a sociologist who was recently activated to divers status in the Pacific OCS Region.

**REGIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF**

**DENVER**

A Special Institute on Federal and Indian Oil and Gas Royalty Valuation and Management is scheduled to be held in Houston, February 2-8, 1998.

Co-sponsored by MMS and the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, the three-day session will provide analyses of issues for valuation and payment of mineral royalties associated with federal and Indian lands.

The session’s format will include presentations of professional papers, panel discussions and hands-on training by representatives from the federal government, industry, and academia. The session is open to the public and the fee is $135.

Additional information about the Foundation can be found on its website at http://www/rmmfl.org or by calling (303) 312-8100.

**GULF OF MEXICO**

To ensure compliance with mitigation measures required of the oil and gas industry during exploration and development of offshore petroleum resources, the MMS developed the Seafloor Monitoring Project. The Gulf of Mexico Region Leasing and Environment Office began the program in 1997 to find a method to examine seafloor impacts caused by industry activities that could affect submerged, protected biological and archaeological sites.

A high resolution (600kHz) side-scan sonar was used to image the seafloor using reflected sound much the same way a camera uses light. By towing the instrument behind a boat, pictures of the ocean floor, up to a distance of 75 meters on either side of the vessel, are produced. The device, operated entirely by MMS personnel, consists of light, portable, battery-powered equipment for use aboard any vessel.

The pilot project accomplished more than was originally planned. Side-scan data were collected on protected biological topographic features at the Sonnier and Flower Garden Banks, and although some evidence of damage to protected features was noted, in most cases, the oil and gas industry had complied with the avoidance measures that MMS recommended. Submerged archaeological features like the steamship New York, which sunk in 1846, also were documented.
A team of MMS scientists recently learned that the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is running out of land-based sand and gravel resources and is in a crisis situation for construction aggregate supplies. Island officials estimate that by the year 2000, land-based deposits will be exhausted.

The Commonwealth is currently permitting sand and gravel extraction from coastal sand dunes and parts of beaches. Alternative sources include dredging offshore deposits, manufacturing sand from crushed rock, and importing aggregates from other islands.

Because of MMS's offshore mineral expertise, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources officially requested that the Service review the island's sand and gravel supply situation and to collect available environmental information and data relative to the offshore areas.

“Our construction industry is vital to the Commonwealth's economy,” said Barry Drucker, a physical scientist with MMS International Activities and Marine Minerals Division (INTERMAR). "In a few years they will run out of construction sand and by early in the next century alternative sources for construction aggregates will have to be developed.”

Drucker, along with Roger Amato, also a physical scientist with INTERMAR, traveled to Puerto Rico to meet with island officials and federal agency representatives to review the island's sand and gravel supply situation and to collect information. To that end, the Pacific Region strives to coordinate data collection in a manner that has trends and has some unity.

Oil spill response planning works. The coordinating efforts of the Minerals Management Service over the past five years made a distinct difference earlier this year in the response to a pipeline spill off the coast of northern Santa Barbara County, California. The planning paid off in the form of a prompt and coordinated response by a wide variety of scientists during the spill. (See November, 1997 PLW, 3.)

As part of the Pacific Outer Continental Shelf Region’s Environmental Studies Program, MMS scientists have monitored delicate intertidal areas in Santa Barbara County, jointly preparing a sampling protocol handbook, and worked with many federal and state agencies and private organizations to set up an intertidal monitoring network in Southern California. On the morning of the spill—September 29—MMS Pacific Region scientists in the Office of Environmental Evaluation were alerted and began mobilizing the region’s Intertidal Survey Team (MINT). By low tide at 3 p.m., scientists armed with video cameras and oil sampling equipment were at Vandenburg Air Force Base. MINT team scientists Maurice Hill and Mike Mcrarry responded to the spill early that morning and joined the Multi-Agency Rocky Intertidal Network (MARINE) scientific teams to conduct surveys.

Because of the coordination efforts and pre-spill planning by MMS, and at the invitation of the on-scene incident commander for the spill, MMS and other agency scientists had time to collect needed pre-impact information along the 15-mile stretch of beach.

The spill tested the coordination and communication efforts of rocky intertidal scientists, equipment accessibility, and mobilization practices. Rob Ricker, from the California Office of Spill Prevention and Response, coordinated the National Damage Response Assessment for the spill, recognized the MMS efforts through his office’s participation in MARINE and by inviting MMS to share its expertise and data.

The MMS Pacific OCS Region has worked diligently to ensure a unified and smoothly coordinated scientific response, should a large spill occur offshore California. The Pacific Region’s goal is for the agencies and industry to have a coordinated response which builds on the scientific research base and results in the joint collection of scientific information. To that end, the Pacific Region strives to coordinate data collection in a manner that has the recognition and confidence of the scientific community. In their pursuit of scientific cooperation, MMS has initiated three efforts. In 1991, the Service and Santa Barbara County jointly initiated the Shoreline Inventory Study, designed to document the shoreline resources in the county. MMS subsequently formed an in-house team of biologists, MINT, to monitor rocky intertidal resources such as abalone, sea stars, mussels, algae, barnacles, and limpets in areas adjacent to offshore oil and gas production.

Scientists look for changes in their abundance. If there are significant changes then additional research is needed. The biggest change noted recently has been a sharp decline in the rock crab population. This decline is brought on by the wasting foot disease which is a virus that causes the crab’s limbs to fall off, rendering it vulnerable to predators and ocean currents. MMS is currently working with the University of California Santa Barbara, through the MMS-funded Coastal Marine Institute, to support this effort.

MMS also facilitated the formation of MARINE, stretching from San Luis Obispo to San Diego, including the offshore islands. This effort, supported by 14 agencies and private organizations—including the National Park Service, California Coastal Commission, and the County of Santa Barbara—links existing monitoring sites along the coast into a database system, and provides for coordination, and scientific review of diverse monitoring programs.

Lastly, MMS, the California Office of Oil Spill Prevention and Response, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Damage Assessment are preparing a rocky intertidal sampling handbook which could be used in the event of a spill to coordinate the collection of data gathered by scientists following a spill so that data can be compared. In previous oil spills, scientists collected data that was difficult to compare across trends and have some unity.

“Construction is important to Puerto Rico’s economy,” said Barry Drucker, a physical scientist with MMS International Activities and Marine Minerals Division (INTERMAR). “In a few years they will run out of construction sand and by early in the next century alternative sources for construction aggregates will have to be developed.”

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In many coastal areas, sand dunes are the first line of defense against erosion and storm damage to man-made structures. The dune system found along many beaches provides a buffer zone which may prevent, or at least decrease, the full power of storm-induced waves from severely impacting the inland coastal area. Ideally, all construction should be landward of the primary dunes and construction should never involve removal of sand from the primary dune system.

Natural sand dunes are formed by winds blowing onshore over the beach, transporting sand landward. Grass and sometimes-bushes grow on sand dunes creating a natural barrier against sea attack. The dunes provide a reservoir of beach sand during severe storms, thus helping to prevent floods and wave damage to adjacent property. In areas where substantial dunes exist, the post-storm beach width can be greater that the pre-storm width.

If dunes are destroyed or threatened, there are ways to restore them artificially, or help to stabilize the existing structures. Planting dune grass or sea oats in bare areas serves to stabilize existing dunes and encourages additional dune growth. Sand fencing is commonly used to trap sand and to increase the size of the primary dunes. The success of sand fencing depends largely on whether sand is presently being blown inland from the beach. Dunes may also be restored, or built from scratch, using sand transported from inland areas or pumped ashore from the adjacent offshore zone.

Scientists respond to the spill early on the morning of Sept. 29 and videotaped MMS long-term monitoring site at Point Sal on Vandenburg Air Force Base. In the background is Melissa Wilson of the University of California. In foreground are MINT team members Manuela Romay Coles and Peter Raimondi of the University of California-Santa Cruz.

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Confronting the Contradictions
New Assistant Secretary Outlines Challenges, Goals & Plans

Why on earth would anyone want to leave beautiful New Mexico and take on the chore of running the Bureau of Indian Affairs? That was the question many people asked Kevin Gover when he was nominated to lead the Bureau.

“I will concede that running the Bureau is probably one of the most difficult jobs in the government,” said Gover, an American Indian attorney and enrolled member of the Pawnee Tribe. “But I believe that is because the Bureau has one of the most daunting and complex missions of any agency in the government,” he told the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs at his confirmation hearing.

The BIA provides critical services, he said, pointing out that it is the primary vehicle for fulfilling the federal trust responsibility to Indian people and Indian governments as well as overseeing tens of millions of acres of trust land and billions of dollars in Indian trust assets. The agency delivers its services to more than a million Indian people. The BIA must also carry on a respectful government-to-government relationship with diverse communities in different social, political, and legal contexts.

“Secondly, the Bureau must develop and consistently apply a working model for vexing problems. The agency finds itself to be full of optimism about its own future and that of the people it serves. I want the agency to prepare to enter the next century with a clear vision of its place in the future of federal-tribal relations.” He outlined three major requirements to resolve what he called the BIA’s identity crisis. First, the agency must find a consensus among tribal, congressional, and administration leaders that specifically defines the missions and objectives of the agency. “We have all the tools necessary to deliver services to the tribes that form a tribe’s destiny.” Gover said. “The choice should belong to the tribe, and the tribe must accept the consequences of its choices.” Congress should support that consensus through appropriations, oversight, and authorizing legislation that allows the BIA and the tribes to solve some of these vexing problems.

Secondly, the Bureau must develop and consistently apply a working model for consultation with tribal governments. Gover agrees with the complaint of many tribal leaders that the BIA has acted without informing the tribes and has offered “consultations” that presented them with decisions that had already been made. “I appreciate the need for a federal agency to exercise its lawful authority and discretion,” Gover said, “but the Tribes have a right to meaningful consultation on matters that affect them as an essential element of the government-to-government relationship. We must develop a system for meaningful consultation and still not let it become a procedural excuse for inaction.”

Thirdly, the BIA must constantly examine how it allocates its resources. While he agreed with the overall goal of doing the greatest good for the greatest number, Gover emphasized that the Bureau also must examine treaty and compact commitments and the federal trust responsibility in order to determine an appropriate allocation of federal resources. “The BIA has been reorganized many times,” he noted, but these have led to little change in how the bureau does its job.

“I do not plan to add to the mountain of documents analyzing the Bureau’s organization, nor do I plan a sweeping reorganization,” Gover said. “I believe in doing small things right, one by one, until the overall look of the organization is precise and efficient.” He noted that congressional oversight, initiatives mandated by the Government Performance and Results Act, and the BIA’s internal auditing procedures “will provide the guideposts for the hundreds and perhaps thousands of little changes that can transform the agency.” To bring about these changes, Gover added, he will need the help of the Bureau’s 11,000 employees and the tribal leadership throughout the country as well as the assistance of Interior leaders, the Congress, and the Administration.

“My objective is to leave the BIA better than I found it, not so much through brilliance and vision as by hard work,” Gover concluded. “And if Indian people can make the same sort of progress in the next 100 years as they have made in the last, at the turn of the twenty-second century, we will see Indian tribal communities as healthy and prosperous as the great nation that surrounds them.”

Landmark Tribal Water Rights Agreement

A water rights agreement that provides certainty for all water users in the Deschutes River Basin and the Metolius River of Oregon was signed by Secretary Babbitt, chiefs of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and Oregon’s Governor John Kitzhaber. Signing for the Tribes were Chief Nelson Wattelatum of the Wasco Tribe, Chief Vernon Henry of the Paiute Tribe, Chief Delvin Heath of the Warm Springs Tribe and Joseph Moses, chairman of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Tribal Council.

“This is a great day for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, a great day for the Deschutes Basin water users and the citizens of Oregon,” said Babbitt at the November 17 ceremony at the Kaluemeeta Lodge on the Warm Springs Reservation. “This is a model for collaboration over conflict, a landmark agreement that recognizes the reserved water rights of the Warm Springs Confederated Tribes. “At the same time it serves the long-term habitat needs of fish and other aquatic species by guaranteeing the full natural flow of each stream and river on the reservation and agreed-upon minimum flows on the two rivers. It will protect the fishing traditions of the Warm Springs Tribes but also vital habitat for fish species that swim up these rivers to spawn.”

The Source

“The most valuable experience I have gained, the things that I know, the ideas I have, the dreams I hold for Indian people all come from my work with tribal leaders,” Kevin Gover told an October 30 U.S. Senate hearing on his confirmation. “I have always believed that the best ideas in Indian affairs do not come from Washington. Instead they come from the work of the people out there on the reservations trying to make these small and struggling governments work.

They constantly are creating and innovating in order to meet the most urgent needs of their communities. I am in awe of the things these people are able to accomplish usually without any financial resources to speak of and sometimes in the face of disputes with the non-Indian communities around them.

Any success I may find in this position is due to having worked with and for people like Alex Lujan and Frank Chavez of Sandia Pueblo; Ralph Goff of the Campo Band; Jacob Viarrial of the Yavapai-Apache Nation. These leaders and dozens of others like them have been my greatest teachers.”

Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary
Ralph Gonzales, Bureau Editor
ralph_gonzales@io.doi.gov

At left, Secretary Babbitt swears in Kevin Gover as the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the Secretary’s Office at Main Interior Building. Below at right, House Interior Committee chairman and House minority leader James Sensenig and House majority leader Tom DeLay both lead through inspiration rather than intimidation, through reward rather than punishment. The people of the BIA are good people and can do their jobs successfully if given the opportunity to apply their natural ability and creativity. At bottom right, Gover is congratulated by Loretta Burt, BIA Deputy Associate Director for Law Enforcement and Support Services.Sec. Babbitt congratulates Kevin Gover as he is sworn in as assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the Secretary’s Office at Main Interior Building at a ceremony on October 30. At left, Gover is congratulated by Loretta Burt, BIA Deputy Associate Director for Law Enforcement and Support Services. Sec. Babbitt congratulates Kevin Gover as he is sworn in as assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the Secretary’s Office at Main Interior Building at a ceremony on October 30. At left, Gover is congratulated by Loretta Burt, BIA Deputy Associate Director for Law Enforcement and Support Services. At left, Secretary Babbitt swears in Kevin Gover as the assistant secretary for Indian Affairs in the Secretary’s Office at Main Interior Building. Below at right, House Interior Committee chairman and House minority leader James Sensenig and House majority leader Tom DeLay both...
The Federal Bureau of Investigation has joined several other federal agencies to provide instructors for the BIA’s water resources training program, according to Hilda Manuel, deputy commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Water Resources Technician Training Program introduces Indian youths who have completed high school to the profession of water resource development and natural resource management. The six-week course is offered every summer at the New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and at CISPUS Learning Center in Randle, Washington.

“I welcome the FBI’s contribution to the program,” said Manuel. “The students in last summer’s program were enthusiastic about the presentation of Special Agent Robert Bornstein of Oklahoma City, who explained the FBI’s role in the prosecution of environmental crimes. Bornstein also demonstrated how to develop and preserve evidence of damage to the environment. In fact, the students in last summer’s program were enthusiastic about the presentation of Special Agent Robert Bornstein of Oklahoma City, who explained the FBI’s role in the prosecution of environmental crimes. Bornstein also demonstrated how to develop and preserve evidence of damage to the environment.

“The FBI is committed to the enforcement and protection of our natural resources, as well as the environment. The Water Resources Technician Training Program is a worthy example of how to develop and preserve evidence of damage to the environment. The students in last summer’s program were enthusiastic about the presentation of Special Agent Robert Bornstein of Oklahoma City, who explained the FBI’s role in the prosecution of environmental crimes. Bornstein also demonstrated how to develop and preserve evidence of damage to the environment.

Hilda Manuel, BIA’s water resources training program, according to Hilda Manuel, deputy commissioner of Indian Affairs. The Water Resources Technician Training Program is a worthy example of how to develop and preserve evidence of damage to the environment.
California State Director Honored

Ed Hastey, the BLM's state director for California, has received the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's prestigious Chuck Yeager Award. The honor is presented to outstanding individuals “who make a difference in on-the-ground conservation.”

The award honors Ed’s ‘can do’ approach to resource conservation and his commitment to partnerships with outside groups and agencies. Working in partnerships with such organizations as the California Biodiversity Council and raising $16 million in one year for fish and wildlife watershed projects were cited as examples of Hastey’s efforts, which have benefited millions of acres of public lands in California.

The award was presented to Hastey by Foundation Executive Director Amon Eno at the Foundation's fall benefit dinner at the California Academy of Sciences—Steinhart Aquarium in San Francisco on October 28. Also presenting the award was BLM National Director Pat Shea, who worked hard to keep the award a surprise until the final night of the presentation.

Presented annually since 1989, the award is named for Foundation Board Member Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, the famous test pilot who was first man to break the sound barrier. It recognizes those individuals who exemplify Yeager’s goal-oriented philosophy. Hastey is only the second BLM employee to receive the award.

Wayne Elmore, the coordinator of the National Riparian Program in Prineville, Oregon, was given the award in 1994.

Schmitt Named Manager of National Recreation Group

Rodger Schmitt, a 26-year BLM veteran and former associate district manager for the bureau in Boise, Idaho, is the new Group Manager for the BLM’s National Recreation Group. In his new position, Schmitt will oversee recreation, travel, and tourism activities on 265 million acres of public lands in the 11 western states.

Schmitt is the first manager for the BLM’s National Recreation Group, which resulted from the October, 1996 reorganization of the BLM’s Headquarters Office. With an annual budget of $35 million, the BLM Recreation Program provides national policy direction for the Recreation Fee Demonstration Pilot Program, reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, innovative partnership agreements, and alternative funding sources for maintaining facilities, services, and programs to meet the needs and expectations of the ever-increasing recreating public. Schmitt’s group works with a staff of 10 in the Washington, D.C. Headquarters Office, three recreation staffers attached to BLM state offices in Arizona, Colorado, and Utah, and 12 state recreation leads in all the BLM state offices.

In addition to his previous responsibilities in the BLM Boise office, where he served for eight years, Schmitt’s earlier positions with the BLM included natural resource analyst in Washington, D.C.; manager of the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, in Las Vegas, Nevada; and senior staff member with the President’s Commission on America’s Outdoors. He spent several years in California where he served as park ranger, senior park ranger, and assistant park manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Schmitt received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration from Humboldt State University, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Resources from Sacramento State University, California.

“His skills will serve the BLM well as we work with the Administration, Congress, the recreating public, local governments, and the recreation industry,” said Maitland Sharpe, assistant director for Renewable Resources and Planning. “Rodger has 26 years of professional natural resource management and outdoor recreation experience,” he added. “Rodger is able to work with many different groups and keep the central themes of the BLM orchestrated and on track,” noted Sharpe, whose directorate includes the National Recreation Program.

Schmitt assumes his position at a time of rapidly increased recreational activity on BLM-administered land. Since 1994, visitation to the BLM public lands has increased by 42 percent to 72 million visitors annually. Recreation and leisure opportunities provided on BLM land include hunting, fishing, hang gliding, hiking, horseback riding, caving, white water rafting, mountain climbing, gold panning, motorcycling, off-highway vehicle driving, wildlife viewing, and driving for pleasure.

BLM Builds Community Support, 6

Celebrating Diversity at Eastern States

Changing Attitudes and Beliefs is a Real Challenge

Cathy Applegate, Eastern States

Human diversity is valuable to the world’s cultural and social preservation as one way to ensure humanity is to global environmental conservation. That was the keynote message of a National Hispanic Heritage Month celebration at BLM’s Eastern States Office.

About fifty guests and employees attending the event were greeted by Hord Tipton, their new director, in fluent Spanish! Well, almost. Although Tipton’s mastery of the Spanish language is limited, his efforts pleased and surprised the audience!

Keynote speaker Sylvia Baca, the deputy assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management, suggested that Hispanic Heritage Month is a time for celebrating not only Hispanic culture but also America’s ethnic diversity.

“Celebrating diversity means ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for people of all ethnic backgrounds, races, religions, ages, and genders,” Baca said.

She emphasized that one of the top priorities for the Department and BLM is creating a workforce that reflects America’s rich ethnic and cultural diversity.

“The real challenge is not just in changing specific numbers,” said Baca, “but changing attitudes and beliefs that comprise our corporate culture. We talk about how diverse terrain and vastly different ecosystems benefit all who use and visit the public lands, and how this diversity contributes to the value of our public land legacy. We have to look at workforce diversity the same way.”

Baca concluded her speech by reflecting on her recent trip to Greece, Italy, and Turkey. “My travels reminded me that cultural diversity is what makes this world such a colorful and interesting place. And it is that diversity that makes the future of peoples of all cultures, backgrounds, and circumstances so full of hope and promise.”

As if to punctuate Baca’s sentiments, Paul Baker, an Eastern States employee who is known for his poetry, presented his thoughts in verse, reciting a poem, entitled What is a Hispanic?, that he had written. The Mystic Warriors, a trio that visited Eastern States once before, delighted listeners with Andean instrumentals.

Spirited South American music of the guitar, charango (miniature guitar), and sampona (reed pipes) soon got feet tapping and hands clapping. And there were a few folks who could not resist that lively beat and just had to dance! As the music played, the Eastern States employees and guests danced their way to tables filled with authentic Mexican cuisine such as chili (Tipton’s hot! hot! hot!), tortillas, salsa, enchiladas, tacos, and sangría.

The cultural diversity event was hosted by Heddy Lozano, the manager of the Hispanic Employment Program, Linda Nix, manager of the Equal Employment Opportunity Program, and the Hispanic Heritage Celebration Committee.

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BLMers Adopt a Virginia Highway

Cathy Applegate, Eastern States

It was a gloomy, rainy Saturday morning, the kind of day just made for sleeping in. But there were no extra winks for the hardly BLMers who had volunteered to take part in the first quarterly Eastern States Adopt-a-Highway event! Besides, the signs were up—everyone driving on Fullerton Road and Boston Boulevard in Springfield, Virginia, would know that BLM-Eastern States was proud to be part of this community.

Jennie Taft, a legal clerk in the division of Cadastral Survey and General Land Office Records, led the effort to have the Eastern States’ office become an official Adopt-a-Highway volunteer group. Taft prepared all the paperwork to apply to the Virginia Department of Transportation for responsibility for a two-mile segment of highway near the office. Once accepted, she set the date for the event, and garnered the support of coworkers, friends, and family.

Adopt-a-Highway volunteers from throughout the region rallied to “get up and go.” The crew included “country boys” from the city, and “city boys” from the farm. They had expected enough volunteers but not as many as they ended up with—a tumultuous crowd of 68.

Outfitted with gloves, vests and bags, the Eastern States’ litter patrol spent about three hours methodically attacking its assigned sections of road. Team members stuffed 30 large trash bags with all manner of refuse—bottles, wrappers, nails, bolts, chunks of plastic, and pieces of glass. What didn’t fit in the bags was left at the litter pick-up location for the state collection trucks.

Virginia’s Adopt A Highway program was developed and introduced in 1988 by the Virginia Department of Transportation in cooperation with Keep Virginia Beautiful. Since then, Virginia’s program has become the second largest in the United States—thanks to countless volunteers who want to make a difference.

Sleepless in Springfield

A pretty, young woman who was dressed in a long, calico skirt greeted us as we approached the homesteaders’ cabin. Her homely smile and cheery “Hello” transported us back in time.

“Welcome to Rich Cabin,” she said, standing on the porch of the rustic, log-built structure, which appeared to be from the late 1800s. It sat in a grassy clearing, flanked by a barn and utility sheds, and surrounded by farm animals—a pristine wilderness setting. The interior was furnished in the simple Amish style and heated by a wood-burning stove.

Her soft countenance suddenly changed as she pierced us with an abrupt question and stern warning: “Do you want to stay on our land?” she asked. “If you want to stay, you have to do chores for us—earn your keep!” she scowled.

For a moment we were caught in a time warp, uncertain what to believe or say. Then her bright smile and gentle laugh eased us back into the present, as she informed us that “chasing the rooster and hen is the hardest. It’s separates the city boys from the country boys. The ones from the city are in awe of the farm animals. It’s like a game. Who can get the most in the pen first.”

The woman dressed in the interpretive clothing of the 1800s is Amy Long from Irving, Texas. She uses the same greeting for all the groups of weary Scouts who stay at her station after a two-day trek through the backcountry of Philmont Scout Ranch. About 20,000 Scouts passed through last summer.

“The Scouts then slop the pigs and make mud for them, milk the cows, chase chickens into coops, and put ducks in their pens,” explained Long, a Philmont program counselor. They learn some of the history and culture of the early American West as part of their experience at the camp, which sprawls over 214 square miles of wilderness in New Mexico’s Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The Rich Homesteader Cabin is one of 32 back-country camps at Philmont, each with a different theme and learning experience. The Scouts who we joined at the cabin were taking part in a Bureau of Land Management-sponsored Leave No Trace class—an outdoor camping ethics program that was added to the backcountry camps this year. The team that ran the Leave No Trace program was led by Bill Wagner and Bill Brooks, who are with the BLM, Attila Bality, National Park Service; Patrick Martinez, U.S. Forest Service; Rich Branne, National Outdoor Leadership School, and Doug Palmer, Philmont’s associate director.

The team presented directors and program counselors of the backcountry camps with plastic cards listing the basic principles of Leave No Trace and teaching methods they could use in getting the message across to Scouts. The 3x5-inch plastic cards are designed to be easily attached to gear or clothing. Each card serves as a reminder and teaching tool for one of the principles of Leave No Trace: plan ahead and prepare; travel light; camp with care; use fire sparingly and only where permitted; use proper and appropriate sanitation techniques; keep the wilderness wild.

What better way to instill good camping ethics in young people than to interrupt their visit to the past (when pristine places were taken for granted) with a reminder of today’s environmental concerns—that it is their responsibility as caretakers of the land to preserve it for their futures as well as for future generations.

The privately-owned homesteader cabin and site, which abuts Philmont’s backcountry, has recently been purchased by Ted Turner. Philmont used the property for the historical reenactment program under an agreement with the previous owners. Camp staff not only hope the new owners will keep the cabin and continue to allow the Scouts access but also look forward to a visit from Jane.

Mona Schermherhorn is a mineral leasing specialist at BLM’s New Mexico State Office at Santa Fe and assistant to BLM’s National Minerals Outreach Coordinator.
Ambassador Kyota also suggested that Interior might consider assisting with an Internet web site to encourage the continued development of traditional art forms in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific. The outlet could help island carvers, painters, and weavers to reach a wider American audience with their art.

The ambassador presented museum assistant curator Anne James a framed painting of one of the most popular Palauan legends—the story of the Magical Breadfruit Tree.

The ambassador later met with John Berry, assistant secretary for Policy Management and Budget, to discuss a number of current issues. OIA coordinates federal budget assistance and program grants to Palau, which was formerly a United Nations trust territory administered by the United States. The Commonwealth, located in the southwest Pacific about 200 miles east of the Philippines, gained its independence in 1995 but is affiliated with the United States through a Compact of Free Association.

Museum Hosts Palau’s Ambassador

The Republic of Palau’s Ambassador to the United States, the Honorable Hersey Kyota, formally opened an exhibit of his nation’s most popular export art at a recent ceremony at the Interior Museum.

In his remarks, Ambassador Kyota, who recently presented his credentials as Palau’s first ambassador to the United States, related some of the history and culture behind Palauan “storyboard art” for the gathering of guests and OIA representatives at the November 20 ceremony. The art form—relief carving and painting—depicted scenes from Palauan life and mythology and was used decorate the beams, rafters, and gables of traditional council houses in Palau.

Dr. Mary McCutcheon, a visiting assistant professor of Anthropology at George Mason University, discussed the evolution of storyboard art, which over the centuries was used to communicate the history and accomplishments of clans and villages, and outlined its continuing role in Palauan culture. Today, Palauan artists cut and paint their visions and interpretations on hardwood boards, which are used to communicate the history and accomplishments of clans and villages, and outlined its continuing role in Palauan culture. Today, Palauan artists cut and paint their visions and interpretations on hardwood boards, which are popular throughout the Pacific, in Hawaii, and in U.S. West Coast communities.

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Federal Funding for U.S.-Affiliated Islands

The fiscal year 1998 Interior Appropriations Bill contains more than $215 million for seven U.S.-affiliated island jurisdictions. The funds are to assist the island governments in delivering services to their citizens and to construct essential public service infrastructure.

The seven entities include four U.S. territories (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and the three freely associated states (the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau). The largest portion of these funds are the sums paid to the freely associated states under the Compact of Free Association—$71,907,000 to FSM, $36,342,000 to RMI, and $19,221,000 to Palau. About $88,059,000 of the total are discretionary funds, which, as finally approved, was $400,000 more than requested by the President.

“Every time a federal budget is enacted, I find myself reassessing to know that President Clinton and the Congress are not only not cutting the insular budget, but are actually increasing it slightly,” said Allen P. Stayman, OIA’s director.

In addition to the $215 million, grants from other federal agencies also provide assistance to the island governments for education, health projects, road-building, and airport construction. A third category of federal funding to the U.S. territories, not covered by Interior’s budget, includes government-to-individual payments, such as food stamps, social security checks, and pension payments to retired federal workers. In 1995, the most recent year in which data are available, these payments to individuals amounted to: $29,584,000 for American Samoa; $139,287,000 for Guam; and $160,136,000 for the U.S. Virgin Islands.
Whatever the outcome of the case, it offers an
awareness of how future reservation casinos might be treated.
Flanked by his colleagues, Duffy explained why the
BIA had chosen to approve the casino project in Hudson. He
had been the BIA’s regional director for Wisconsin,
and he had worked closely with the Chippewa tribes
during the course of the Hudson casino project.

The Hudson casino had been a long-time
issue for the Chippewa tribes. For many years,
they had sought to open a casino in the
community of Hudson, which is located
about 85 miles north of Madison, Wisconsin.

The tribe had submitted an application to
the BIA in 1993, and after a lengthy
process, the BIA had approved the project.

But the local community had
strongly opposed the casino,
and the tribe had faced
numerous challenges
in trying to get the project
approved.

In 1994, the BIA had
approved the project,
and the tribe had
begun to build
the casino
in Hudson.

But the local community
had continued to oppose
the project, and
the tribe had faced
difficulties in getting
the project approved.

The tribe had faced
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A SILENT STORM CIRCLES BABBITT

By Thomas Oliphant, Globe Columnist

WASHINGTON—In the rapidly evolving scandal culture around here, the belated discovery of officially sought documents is supposed to produce a symphony of chuckling and manufactured outrage.

Now comes the Interior Department’s senior officialdom, bearing initial drafts and other material related to a decision in an overhyped Native American gambling casino case, and all the usual squawkers are oddly silent.

Could it be that the latest evidence is worthy only if it adds fuel to the endless shouting matches and gets a defenacing ho-hum if it buttresses a position the officials involved had already taken? It’s possible. But this tale is instructive in the wake of Attorney General Janet Reno’s latest independent counsel pronouncement.

For the cops, at least, the standard appears to be direct evidence that a real crime has been committed and that someone covered by the statute may have committed it. For the rest of the scandal culture, far cheaper fodder will do.

To rewind, it was considered a big deal in the press just before Thanksgiving that another batch of videos of Democratic Party and Clinton-Gore reelection events had turned up in White House archives. One video in particular got nearly all the play: of a fund-raising event held on the evening of July 13, 1995, in the country home of one of the Washington lawyers lobbying the casino case and featuring President Clinton himself as the draw.

The lawyer, Thomas Schneider of Maryland, was part of the team lobbying for rejection of a casino plan pushed by lobbyists for three tribes in Wisconsin. Schneider’s lobbying, on behalf of one of the tribes, operated a casino nearby and eventually gave nearly $400,000 to the Democrats.

The reason for the play, in the words of the Associated Press, was that the fund-raiser was held “the night before the Interior Department rejected the gaming plan.” This juxtaposition of events to imply cause and effect is silly, since neither six-figure fund-raising parties nor government decisions are arranged with that kind of precision timing.

But since the video was a big deal, it ought to be relevant that the freshly discovered decision drafts and other material clearly show an issue that had already been decided well before the fund-raiser by professional people at the department. And they show a timing judgment for the decision’s formal announcement with no evidence of White House pressure and with significant evidence pointing in a different direction.

The decision drafts all come from the computer of George Skibine, an 18-year veteran of the department who ran its Indian Gaming Management staff; they were

A View of Hudson Casino Controversy, 31

opposition, not grounded in factual evidence of detriment, to obstruct Indian economic development sets a precedent for extensive interference, compromised sovereignty and circumvention of the intent” of the Indian gaming law. Hartman also dismissed the contention of other tribes that a rival casino would hurt their own gambling operations, saying, “business abhors competition.”

Despite Hartman’s arguments, Sibbison said, everyone in the high-level policy group, including civil servants Skibine and deputy BIA head Michael Anderson, agreed that it was time to quiet fears that the agency would force communities to accept tribal casinos. “We wanted to send a message,” she said. “We wanted to draw a bright line.”

Skibine drafted a decision. It not only cited the local opposition as evidence of detriment; it also said Babbitt was exercising his broad discretion under the decades-old Indian Reorganization Act to refuse to take off-reservation land into a tribe’s trust.

Improper influence?

No one has shown that White House officials influenced or ordered the decision in the case, but there is plenty of evidence that the lobbyists tried to get the White House involved. On April 24, 1995, O’Connor shook Clinton’s hand at a Twin Cities reception and complained to the president that a White House aide wasn’t taking his calls about the case. That day, presidential adviser Bruce Lindsey phoned the White House from Air Force One to pass along O’Connor’s beef.

Four days later, O’Connor and the leaders of five of the opposing tribes met in Washington with DNC chairman Fowler. Fowler has defended his ensuing calls to senior presidential aide Ikies and Interior on behalf of the tribes. If the tribes’ potential as campaign donors hadn’t registered from Fowler’s calls, O’Connor reinforced the message by faxing Ikies a letter about the case on May 8, stressing that the opposing tribes were longtime Democratic contributors. O’Connor then enlisted the help of law partner Thomas Schneider, a friend of Clinton’s who later was the host of a $420,000 fund-raiser for the president.

Schneider said in a court deposition that in mid-May 1995 he approached Ikies at a Clinton fund-raiser at Washington’s Mayflower Hotel and said that he would look into it. Schneider said he didn’t remember talking to Schneider, said he turned the matter over to his aides, The White House says Ikies’ aides made only three routine calls to Interior to check the status of the decision.

The casino affair probably would not have drawn so much attention were it not for Eckstein, the Arizona lawyer who came to the Interior Department to meet with Babbitt on July 14, the day the decision was issued. Eckstein said that Babbitt told him that Ikies had ordered the decision be issued that day and remarked that “these Indians” had donated about $500,000 to Democrats.

Eckstein’s allegations have prompted an FBI inquiry aimed at determining whether a special prosecutor should investigate the truthfulness of Babbitt’s sworn testimony. Babbitt’s case has not been helped by a fund-raising appeal that lobbyists O’Connor and Kato sent out on Sept. 14, 1995. “As witnessed in the fight to stop the Hudson Dog Track proposal,” they wrote, “the Office of the President can and will work on our behalf when asked to do so.”

Rabbitt’s chief spokesman, Mike Gaudlin, said that in the face of the lobbyists’ hoasts to their clients and the allegations of congressional Republicans and the losing tribes, he welcomed the Justice Department’s “experienced investigators, who are trained in weighing evidence.” But, he said, even as his investigators find no wrongdoing, the stain of the controversy will be difficult for Babbitt to erase.

“The damage is done,” Gaudlin said.

The decision is expected to be made public in the coming days by Justice and Interior officials involved have maintained credibly for months? Seems so. And this tale is instructive in the wake of Attorney General Janet Reno’s latest independent counsel pronouncement.

A Worm’s Eye View of the Hudson Casino Controversy, 31

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Viewpoint

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As it turned out, the regional Interior Department office thought the application should be granted; civil servants here disagreed; and the only evidence to date is that the case was decided on its merits. As for the timing, the new material shows a desire for speed in getting the decision announced. But it shows the reason was a forthcoming visit to the region by Ada Deer, director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who had recused herself from the case.

In one computer message on July 8, Skibine wrote: “The secretary” —Bruce Rabbit— “wants this to go out ASAP because of Ada’s impending visit to the Great Lakes area.” In another, handwritten note on July 10, Heather Sibbison, an Interior Department official, urges that copies of the decision be faxed to affected tribes “so that they will have some time to digest the information before Ada arrives later in the look.”

Imagine the hue and cry had any of this stuff included pressure to announce the decision in time for a campaign fund-raiser. As it is, a lawsuit is already moving forward, brought by the losing tribe, charging political interference. And, where there is campaign money, a look-see by the Justice Department’s huge task force is anything but inappropriate. But for Reno to seek an independent counsel on the existing evidence is ridiculous. And it would be especially ridiculous if, as he has testified without contradiction, Babbitt had no role in deciding the issue whatsoever.