



FAWN



FISH AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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THE WILD SIDE

Junior D. Kerns, NMFVA President

As I begin my final *Wild Side* column, I want to discuss change. In all our lives, change is one of the few constants. We change jobs. We change careers. We change marital status. We change Congressmen. Even if we have no intention of changing, sometimes changes happen to us. Our job is eliminated. Our military installation is eliminated. Our marriage is eliminated. The entire Congress changes. Your Board of Directors are familiar with those types of changes. By my very unofficial count, we have had at least 5 job changes, 3 relocations, 3 pending or completed marital status changes, and 1 new Congress in just the last 12 months.

Of course, change can be good or bad. Usually, if change happens to you, it will be perceived as worse than change initiated by you. That is not always the case. For instance, change brought about by winning the lottery would probably be perceived as "good change", although your ability

to cause or direct that change is somewhat limited. On the other hand, change you initiate can be exciting, can raise your standard of living, or can enhance your "pursuit of happiness".

I have been working for DoD as a biologist for 17 years now. I have watched my own job title and duties change numerous times over those years. I survived several times as my job was deleted from the TDA (Table of Distribution and Allowances,

which is a document that tells an Army installation just how many people are required and what fraction of that a Commander is allowed to actually hire. If a position is included on the TDA, you have about 70% chance of it being filled. If it is not on the TDA, the chances drop to between 0 - 5%. But I digress...) and have even experienced the queasy feeling that comes from being handed furlough notices and RIF (Reduction In Force) notices.

Experience has taught me that if I take an active role in

IN THIS ISSUE

Annual Meeting Agenda	3
Envir. Qual. Office in OSD	3
Conserv. Readies for new Congress	4
Nominations Committee Report	4
Communications Workshop	4
Biological Diversity Initiative	4
Field Notes	5
Cooperative Initiative in Texas	6
DoD Bird Club	7
Meetings of Interest	7
Best Wishes	8
Job Announcements	9
"Not So Good" News	9

the change, I can prevent many (or even most) negative impacts from occurring to me or my interests. For although I have seen coworkers endure unpaid furloughs and lose their jobs in a RIF, I have managed to survive (and sometimes thrive) as a result of changes. I am no one special; if I can do it, so can you.

Resistance to change is a normal human reaction. Is there anyone so new to this profession as to not remember the massive resistance to combining Natural Resource Management with the Environmental Programs? Or how about the resistance displayed by some Natural Resource Administrators to pulling our programs out from the control of the Engineers (by any of their numerous names). But now that it has happened at many installations, I think just about everyone will agree that it has meant more program money, more people, more promotions, even more job satisfaction.

As I alluded in the last issue, NMFWA is facing change. We can either sit passively as change occurs and accept whatever happens, or we can actively, assertively, or even aggressively take charge of those changes that are going to occur. I believe that as biologists, we cannot ignore the changes that are taking place within the natural resources profession on DoD lands.

For those of you with long memories, this will be a review. Do you remember back in when "land management" was the name of our function and "improved grounds maintenance" was our role? Most of the staff were agronomists, entomologists, and horticulturists (they were called "grounds keepers"). Then came the "forestry and agricultural management" era on military installations. Money could be generated on installations by selling timber and grazing rights. Large forestry staffs sprang up everywhere that had marketable timber. Now, we are at the crest (some say the tail end) of the "wildlife biology" era. Laws such as NEPA and ESA forced installations to recognize that wildlife counts too. What will come next?

Our organization has greatly benefited from the biologists' turn in the sun. Had it never occurred, we would not exist as an organization. But change continues. Installations are hiring botanists,

ecologists, and cultural resource managers at ever increasing rates. There are even NEPA specialists these days, many who have degrees other than biology. Natural resource management continues to change.

Just as the natural resource personnel on military installations change, NMFWA must also change to suit their needs (read that **your** needs). Did you know that fish and/or wildlife biologists are a minority within our fish and wildlife organization? **Less than 1/3 of our membership are fish and/or wildlife biologists** (the percentage is even less for voting membership). This sends shivers up the spines of some of our members. This association was, after all, created of biologists, by biologists, and for biologists.

I think it is time that we change. We should grow to encompass **all** natural resources professionals in DoD. I include NEPA personnel, Clean Water Act compliance personnel, archaeological and historic preservation personnel, natural resource law enforcement personnel, and natural resource support staffs (clerks, typists, computer technicians, etc.), along with the more obvious foresters, agronomists, and entomologists.

This is the association that can and should lead the way to tomorrow for **all** DoD natural resources personnel. We have the organization and the talent. We are at the right place at the right time. All we need do now is bring the rest of our co-workers into the fold. I have no doubt that they will be happy to join, if we allow NMFWA to grow to meet their needs and desires as well.

When we meet in Minneapolis in March, at the General Business Meeting, there will be a couple of presentations regarding this issue. We will be discussing everything from "voting membership" to changing the name (and acronym) of NMFWA to the design of a logo to the "mission" of this association. Please try to attend, this is **your** organization after all. You can either help direct the changes you want or you can complain about the changes that happen around you.

One final thought:

Back last summer, during my first *Wild Side* column, I concluded with the thought that DoD

biologists, as a group, are some of the luckiest people on Earth. Let me amend that now, by thanking every one of you that has made this year of my presidency go by so quickly and enjoyably. It has been a great year for me and I thank you all for making that possible. You have made me feel as though **I am the luckiest person on Earth.**

**SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT:
NMFWA ANNUAL MEETING**

by Bob Progulske

The NMFWA Annual Meeting and DoD Fish/Wildlife Training Workshop will be held in conjunction with the 60th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, 26-31 March 1995 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The conference hotel will be the Minneapolis Hilton and Towers. Hotel reservation information will be sent with the registration packets. The NMFWA/DoD training format will be similar to past years, with four technical sessions, a DoD/Service policy session, annual NMFWA business meeting, and banquet. **Complete registration packets will be sent to all NMFWA members during January 1995.** Please contact Bob Progulske (DSN: 968-7119 ext. 306, Comm. (813) 452-4119 ext. 306) if you need more information prior to receiving the registration material.

The registration fee will be **\$150**, payable with cash or check **at the registration desk at the conference.** The registration fee includes entry to all technical sessions at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference and at the DoD Training Sessions. The registration fee will pay for one meal, the NMFWA banquet on Thursday night, 30 March.

We are still looking for participants for the Wednesday night Show and Tell. Slide shows, video tapes, or posters are encouraged and welcomed. Contact Bob Progulske with your ideas. The DoD technical sessions will be held 29-30 March 1995. Each session will have 4-5, 20 minute presentations. Papers for these sessions have been selected.

DoD Technical Session 1 - Topic: **Managing Natural Resources with Ecosystem Processes**

DoD Technical Session 2 - Topic: **Outdoor Recreation Programs on DoD Lands**

DoD Technical Session 3 - Topic: **Endangered Species Management on DoD Lands**

DoD Technical Session 4 - Topic: **Using Predator Control for Endangered Species Management**

The DoD policy sessions and service break-out sessions will be held Friday 31 March 1995. The Chairs for those sessions are listed below.

DoD Policy Session Chair: Peter Boice - DSN: 664-5707, COMM: (703) 640-5707

Army Policy Session Chair: Phil Pierce - DSN: 226-8816, COMM: (703) 696-8816

Air Force Policy Session Chair: HQ Air Force (LTC Tom Lillie and/or Doug Ripley) DSN: 225-6118, COMM: (703) 695-6118

Navy Policy Session Chair: HQ (Tom Egeland and/or Merrily Severance) DSN: 221-0427, COMM: (703) 325-0427

Marine Corps Policy Session Chair: Jim Omans - DSN: 226-0865, COMM: (703) 696-0865

Corps of Engineers Policy Session Chair: To be announced

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OFFICE
ESTABLISHED IN OSD**

by L. Peter Boice

Three of DoD's environmental pillars -- conservation, compliance, and pollution prevention -- are now under the leadership of the new Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defence (Environmental Quality), Mr. Peter Walsh. Two other program elements -- the Legacy program and Education and

Training -- report directly to Mr. Walsh.

How does this affect your program? Mr. Peter Boice, Conservation Director, will continue to oversee natural and cultural resources conservation issues, including fish and wildlife, T&E species, forestry, ecosystem management, historic and archeological sites, and Native American issues. Mr. Peter Nessen in the Conservation office works range and overflight issues, as well as Conservation-related legislative and budgetary issues. Col Robert McGuire (ARNG), Legacy Director, is now responsible for administering and overseeing the Legacy program.

The other EQ directors are Ms. Sullivan (Compliance), and Ms. Carle Parker (Pollution Prevention). Mr. Richard Lemaire manages the education and training program.

CONSERVATION READIES FOR THE NEW CONGRESS

by L. Peter Boice

It's a safe bet that all environmental programs will come under increasing scrutiny in the new Congress. I believe that we need to work hard now to ensure that the value of our Conservation program to the military mission is clearly communicated to all key decision-makers, both inside and outside of the Department.

To assist this effort, I'm requesting your help. I'd like to collect as many "good news" stories as possible which communicate this message -- "this conservation program directly contributed to readiness and the execution of the military mission by [fill in the blank]." I'd like as much detail as you think is necessary to succinctly convey your story to nonprofessionals. I'll collect these stories and ensure they're distributed to those who should hear this important message.

Please fax (703-604-5934) me your stories as soon as possible, or mail them to me at (ES)/EZ-CO, 400 Army-Navy Drive, #206, Arlington, VA 22202.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

by Thomas Wray II

As usual, it has been a chore to complete this upcoming year's nomination slate. So many people are so busy they can't seem to find some time to contribute to a worthy cause. The next time you use that excuse, think about those that have put time into this organization, and what things would be like if they hadn't. Whether you wish to admit it or not, our organization has made life better for you, your program, and the natural resources on DoD lands. Voting members can expect their nominations package in the mail by early Feb.

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMUNICATIONS WORKSHOP

by Thomas Wray II

Tentative plans for offering the Legacy-sponsored Natural Resources Communications Workshops are underway. We expect two regional workshops to be held on DoD installations this summer. More specific information will follow in the May issue of the *FAWN*.

These workshops will stress the basics of being a good communicator, including the use of graphics, but will not include hands-on computer graphics. We believe that participants will benefit most from a workshop that teaches how to give a good presentation and design the accompanying graphics.

Please contact me (DSN 249-4186/703-663-4186) about your interest so I may add you to a growing list.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

by Col Gene Hickman

We have all been working hard toward a goal of good ecosystem management on the areas we manage. Unfortunately, we have not always had the support or understanding of our commanders. Consequently, our efforts have been fragmented and were not based on any strategy or formal DoD goals and objectives. In August, the Department of

Defence launched its initiative to "develop an implementable strategy to protect biological diversity on DoD lands in the context of the military mission." This initiative is an outgrowth of a similar federal initiative that established a goal for implementing biological diversity on all federal lands. The August meeting was attended by about 30 participants forming a partnership and representing: all the military services, DoD, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, The Keystone Center, Duke University, University of Florida, National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and U.S.D.A. Forest Service. The Keystone Center is organizing and facilitating the dialogue process for the initiative. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is tasked to prepare a technical framework for biodiversity conservation. They will describe key scientific principles and management techniques, drawn from practical experience in other settings, to serve as a basis for discussion. Using the input from the dialogue, TNC will develop a field-level guidance to help installation managers apply biodiversity principles on the ground. Further meetings will continue through the spring. Each of the military services has identified key contacts to develop practical guidance and an implementation strategy for the biodiversity initiative. These contacts will be obtaining information on current operational and natural resources programs to use in formulating recommendations and developing guidance that is consistent with their individual service's mission. This initiative is something that many of us have been looking forward to for some time. Stay tuned and we will keep you posted on our progress.

FIELD NOTES

mostly by Tom Poole

FORT DEVENS, MA - The University of Massachusetts Botany Department will soon publish a vascular plant flora for the installation. This is the culmination of efforts by contractors, volunteers and DoD personnel over the past 5 years. Peer reviewed papers on plant communities within the flood plain

of the Nashua River and the short-term effects of prescribed fire in pitch pine - scrub oak stands are in the works.

PATUXENT RIVER NAS, MD - Doug Lister is a happy man. An Ash-throated Flycatcher has taken up temporary residence only 300 meters from his office. This western visitor is the fifth Maryland record for the species. Doug oversees three MAPS projects in addition to his other Partners in Flight activities.

FORT McCOY, WI - A conservation plan for the endangered Karner Blue Butterfly awaits final approval by the USF&WS. The installation is home to the (purportedly) largest known population of this rare lepidopteron. The endangered species biologist who recently joined Kim Mello's staff will have additional duties assigned if nearby timber wolves move into the fort.

YUMA PROVING GROUND, AZ...is successfully demonstrating methods for using native plants (salvaged from testing and construction sites) to rehabilitate disturbed lands on YPG and the lower Sonoran Desert. Partners for the Legacy project are the Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service, USDA) and YPG's Mobility Test Office. They are evaluating technologies, i.e. chemical applications, soil stabilization materials, seed conditioning and plant propagation techniques, to meet the challenges of land recovery in a harsh environment. Annual rainfall here is 3 1/2" with an evaporation rate of 10'. (Hey, Junior! How many inches of snow does this translate to?) Delores Guana is the Legacy Project Administrator for YPG. She emphasizes the public awareness benefits generated by this project, particularly the role of xeroscaping in the desert environment.

FORT PICKETT, VA - "A dull ax is worse than useless". A dull blade will bounce off the wood and injure the axeman. This truism from the forestry side of the house illustrates the necessary interaction between the worker and the tools in the toolbox. Joe Proffitt is trying to put a better edge on an

increasingly important tool in our resource management toolbox. Joe is the GIS "guru" coordinating the Land Condition Trend Analysis (LCTA) program at Fort Pickett. He brought the trainers and the resource management agencies together. These discussions led to the development of common definitions for plant communities and vegetation layers. They also changed the sample plot from linear to area, allowing flexible application to local conditions. Work sheets are used to evaluate factors such as slope, erosion percentages and other site values to create a priority list of projects for training area rehabilitation. The data can be transposed to natural resource management objectives. This approach makes the GIS system much more "user friendly" and provides the managers with rapid access to specific data. One of the end products is an abbreviated LCTA report (70 - 100 pages) that is easy to read.

FORT RILEY, KS - Efforts to reintroduce elk to the Flint Hills of Kansas are moderately successful to date. An additional 17 animals were released on the installation in January, 1994. Radio-telemetry demonstrates a mortality loss of only 2 animals from this group. The herd is currently estimated at 90 animals. Local farmers and ranchers are glad to see that most of the elk are staying on the fort. Dave Jones reports a new telemetry project will begin this year with a \$6,000.00 grant from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and funds from the State of Kansas. Researchers will examine habitat use, daily movement, home ranges and elk interactions with military activities.

FORT SILL, OK - Fort Sill has, for many years, used Eagle Scouts to do various fish and wildlife projects on post. These have included a very successful bluebird nestbox project, building raptor nesting structures, constructing nature trails, and putting fish structure in ponds. The most recent project was seining West Cache Creek, one of the major drainages on Quanah Range.

One reason that this stream was selected is that the adjacent Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge just completed sampling their portion of the drainage. West Cache Creek is an intermittent stream, and

eleven different pools were sampled. While most of the fish found were common species, we did find two species on post that were not found on the Refuge.

This project has helped Fort Sill evaluate the aquatic habitat of West Cache Creek. It is our hope to seine some other drainages on post with the help of Eagle Scouts. They are a great source of volunteer labor, and who knows, we may just hook one of those young Scouts as a wildlife biologist.

COOPERATIVE INITIATIVE IN TEXAS

by Jackie Schlatter

Camp Bullis is an approximately 28,000 acre sub-installation for Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Previous land use practices (both agricultural and military) have resulted in a highly degraded landscape typical of the Balcones Canyonlands in this region. The dominant vegetation is Ashe juniper and plateau live oak. Camp Bullis is also home to two endangered bird species, the Golden-cheeked Warbler and the Black-capped Vireo. Therefore, nesting habitat for both species is found on the installation.

At Camp Bullis, the current land restoration program consists of prescribed burning, some brush clearing by hand, and improved land use planning. As a means to facilitate land restoration, a cooperative effort between the Texas Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Camp Bullis has been initiated.

On 29 Oct 94, 15 TNC volunteers worked with Camp Bullis personnel to remove regrowth juniper in a drainage area located in the recharge zone of the Edwards aquifer. Clearing of regrowth Ashe juniper from the drainage area will improve herbaceous cover, reduce erosion and permit subsequent management by prescribed burning. In addition, this is part of a long-range management plan to restore habitat to native vegetation. This in turn will provide more "habitat" for military training and improve habitat for biodiversity. This effort was coordinated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife and did not occur in or near endangered species habitat.

Approximately three acres were cleared of Ashe

juniper on during the workday. Another workday is scheduled for 18 Feb 95 to complete the project. In addition, two other workdays are scheduled in April and October of 1995 for other habitat restoration activities.

DoD BIRD CLUB

by Kyle Rambo

Are you interested in joining the DoD Bird Club now being formed? With the recent success of the Partners in Flight program, interest in birds and birding (formerly referred to as birdwatching) is gaining within DoD. Closet birders are now coming out of the closet. No longer are songbird, dickey birds, tweety birds or whatever you prefer to call those LBJ's (little brown jobs) strictly in the realm of the non-game or endangered species biologist. The average wildlife biologist and natural resources manager are now experiencing the challenge and excitement of recognizing the full diversity of avian fauna. The conservation of neotropical migratory landbirds has offered many professionals their first real insight into the working principles of biodiversity and ecosystem management. Birding as a hobby can hone and enhance many of your professional skills, such as species identification and habitat associations, not to mention the sheer enjoyment it can provide.

Are you ready to try a new hobby, or join with others like yourself who are already practicing birders? I'm sure many of you have been tempted before, but were reluctant because of potential ridicule from one or more peer groups. Are you a hunter and/or game manager who fears the scorn of non-hunting birders or the ridicule of hardcore hook and bullet club members? Fear no more. I have many personal friends who are both hunters and birders, as I am. Birding is just another form of hunting and collecting to them. They are as comfortable toting a shotgun afield pursuing waterfowl or upland game as they are carrying binoculars and spotting scope looking at shorebirds, songbirds and raptors. I often carry binoculars for birdwatching while hunting. It's okay. Come out of the closet now!

Birding can be enjoyed alone or in groups. One of the most rewarding aspects of group birding for me has been the added dimension of making new friends and taking advantage of the assistance of local "experts". Several DoD biologist have been getting together recently at our annual training workshops and other meetings for birding excursions (and just general sightseeing tours). We are now trying to expand the group by forming a DoD Bird Club, complete with a club patch, newsletter and membership directory. We would like to develop a publication of birding hotspots on or near military installations, with members preparing lists of regional or local "specialty" species and the seasons in which they can be found. Members could lead field trips at meetings or workshops, trade checklists, offer assistance to visiting DoD birders, and participate in the training of novice birders. Of course, this would be accomplished within a very loose and informal social framework. After all, we believe that birding should always be fun!

If you are interested in joining the DoD Bird Club or would like more information, please call Kyle Rambo or Doug Lister at DSN 326-3670 or COMM (301) 826-3670/5456 or write to: Natural Resources Manager, Public Works Department, Code 8.1.3.6.2, Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, MD 20670-5409.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

1996 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference by Thomas Wray II

The Program Committee for the 61st Conference, to be held in Tulsa, OK is soliciting ideas for the special and technical sessions. As a member of the Conference Program Committee, the Association has assumed the responsibility of being a productive entity in the planning process. I request that each member give this matter consideration and provide input to our permanent mailing address by 1 Feb 95.

Topics should focus on important regional, national, or international biological, ecological, and socio-economic resources. Please provide topic\title,

statement of purpose\scope, names and addresses of possible individuals to serve as session chairs, and names\addresses\subject areas of candidate speakers.

Lets take advantage of this opportunity to help shape a major conservation meeting.

Going Batty - Part II by Tom Poole

Boston University will host the 10th International Bat Research Conference in August, 1995. The conference will convene 6-11 August, however there are several pre- and post-conference workshops that may be of interest to association members. For example, "Field Methods for the Study of Bats" will be presented as four-day excursions in Portal, AZ, Peterborough, NH, and southern Ontario. Brown University, RI, will host a half-day session on echolocation.

For detailed information, write to: 10th International Bat Research Conference, Department of Biology, Boston University, Boston, MA 02215.

Veterinary Wildlife Management Course by Jim Gallagher

The Department of Animal and Veterinary Science at the University of Idaho is sponsoring a course on Veterinary Wildlife Management at the Caine Veterinary Teaching and Research Center. The course will be held April 10-14, 1995, and is a 40-hour comprehensive course in veterinary wildlife management approved for 4 Continuing Education Units at U. of I. The course is limited to 10 people on a 'first come, first served' basis, and the registration fee is \$750. For more information, call Caine Veterinary Teaching and Research Center at (208) 454-8657

Wildlife Capture, Immobilization, and Safety Course by Jim Gallagher

International Wildlife Veterinary Services, Inc. offers a course on Wildlife Capture, Immobilization, and Safety. The course is specifically developed to meet the needs of the students, and is offered at your location. The course can be offered over 1, 2, or 3 days, depending on the breadth and scope of

instruction required. In addition to capture, handling, and safety, IWVS can also provide instruction on wildlife diseases, radio telemetry, and related technologies. IWVS can also provide consulting services for disease management, capture and relocation, husbandry and preventive medicine, and other topics. For more information contact Dr. Terry Kreeger, 1956 Jenkins Street NE, Cedar, MN 55011 or phone (612) 434-3070.

Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists

The Fall, 1995 Meeting of the Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists will be held October 16-20, 1995, at the Ashland Hills Inn in Ashland, Oregon, where rooms are available for \$53 per night.

Contact: Wayne Ferguson
Serology Section
National F&WL Forensics Laboratory
1490 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520
Phone (503) 482-4191
Fax (503) 482-4989

BEST WISHES

NMFWA wishes to extend our sincere wishes for a speedy and full recovery to Ms. Libbie Borgatti. Libbie is one of the environmental staffers of Army Material Command in Alexandria, Virginia. For those of you that don't know her, she is one of the nicest and most positive people working for DoD that you are ever likely to meet. She sustained severe injury as the result of an assault. At this time, we do not know when or if she will return to work. Folks that know her are encouraged to send letters to her, care of her parents:

Libbie Borgatti
c/o Richard & Dorothy Borgatti
5309 Old Castle Lane
Springfield, VA 22151

JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is looking for applicants to fill several temporary positions working on Legacy Resource Management Projects in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. Any interested applicants should contact Joe Meehan at: Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Aleutian Islands Unit, NAF Adak Alaska, PSC 486 Box 5251, FPO-AP 96506 or call (907) 592-2406. Positions include:

Wildlife Biologist GS-7/9 (term appointment, not to exceed 2 years). Position will be the project leader on a seabird/waterfowl habitat restoration project through the eradication of introduced Norway rat at Eareckson Air Station, Shemya Island. We will be seeking applicants that have a strong understanding of biological principles, possesses good writing and organizational skills, and can work well with a variety of people and agencies. The position will be responsible for all preliminary duties of the project (study plan development, permitting, organizing, consulting, etc.) as well as the actual eradication. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

Biological Technician GS-5 and Biological Volunteer (one each). Temporary, May - September 1995. Naval Air Facility and Naval Security Group Activity, Adak Island. Desire applicants with a degree in Wildlife Biology or wildlife field experience. Experience working in remote areas under harsh weather conditions and skills operating small boats is helpful. Field projects include nest searches and population monitoring of marbled murrelets; studying Aleutian green-winged teal breeding biology; conducting point-count passerine monitoring; and monitoring populations and productivity of tufted puffins, bald eagles and waterfowl. Volunteers are provided transportation and a stipend. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

Fort Wainwright Natural Resources Team Leader Position

In a matter unrelated to the Christmas tree story related elsewhere in this issue of the *FAWN*, there have been a number of inquiries regarding the job vacated by Junior Kerns when he left Fort Wainwright in June 1994. As of the first of January 1995, the position had not been filled. The Natural Resources Team Leader position was rated as a GS-11 and non-supervisory while Junior was in it, but it may be advertised as a GS-12. The position announcement had been prepared by Civilian Personnel Office of Fort Richardson, but had not yet been approved by the Garrison Commander to be filled. If interested, keep in contact with the CPO of Fort Richardson, Alaska.

"NOT SO GOOD" NEWS

The \$34,000 Christmas Tree at Fort Wainwright, Alaska

In a story that is as scary as it is bizarre, it appears that \$400 hammers and \$600 coffee pots have nothing on Fort Wainwright, Alaska. Because this issue deals with natural resources, it is hoped that our members can use this as a teaching tool for our own Commands. The following is provided to us from a source who wishes to remain anonymous. Unofficial word has it that repercussions have already occurred to employees who may have allowed this story to break to the local (Alaska) press.

It seems that someone within the Command of the Army in Alaska decided that Fort Wainwright should change its annual Christmas season celebrations. The post had traditionally maintained a beautiful, large white spruce on a crescent of lawn directly across the street from the formal post parade field. The tree was wired with holiday lights and required only a few hours of maintenance each year.

Whether it came about as the result of a suggestion or some other method is unclear (the ensuing investigations will undoubtedly answer

many questions), but a non-military "committee" was established to direct all holiday activities for the post. Apparently, this translated into the wife of a colonel making all decisions, with the apparent authority of the Commanding General behind her. She was given "final" approval over every action that occurred, no matter what the impact to the government.

Quoting from the Union newsletter, the *Wainwright Arbitrator*, December 94 issue, in an article written by American Federation of Government Employees local 1834 President Wanda Laliberte:

"... As a result, two landscaped/cultivated trees that were 55-65 years old were destroyed. These two large trees had an appraised (combined) value of \$18,000. The thoughtless destruction of our natural resources to satisfy one individual's whims is unacceptable. Here is the scenario:

1. One live Christmas tree is to be planted between the (post exchange) and the (Physical Fitness Center). However, when this decision was reached, it was far too late in the year to accomplish such a planting. Rather than plan ahead for next year, and put a hold on these plans until then, it was decided to cut and move a tree into place.

2. Areas for cutting trees were designated by the Environmental (Resources Division). A (Public Works) employee (at a \$30+ per hour wage) then escorts the military spouse to these areas to select a tree. Those that were found to be of an acceptable quality were inaccessible. Due to the time frame and continuing (C)ommand pressure, the decision was then made to cut a tree in another undesignated area.

3. Temperature(s were) now ranging from -30 to -40 degrees. An area was plowed to access the newly selected tree. (Public Works) employees then cut an 80 ft. tree that was 55-65 years old. A crane, tractor with lowboy, loader, etc. were used.

4. The choker was put in the wrong place to lift the tree and in the process of lowering the tree, (some) branches were broken off. The tree was lifted into place. The military spouse sees the tree before any cosmetic work is done, and finds the tree to be totally unacceptable. (Directorate of Public Works) was then directed to cut another tree.

(Public Works) employees attempted to drill holes for replacement of the broken branches. This is again deemed unacceptable.

5. The (Public Works) employee meets with the military spouse so that she can give her approval for a second tree. This new tree is also from an unauthorized area. The tree is removed, and once again, a 55-65 year old tree is destroyed. The tree is put into place without mishap this time and is finally found to be acceptable by the military spouse.

6. By now, the word had gotten out and both civilian employees and military members (were) becoming irate about the mounting expenditures and hidden costs - in addition to the loss of two valuable, mature trees. These are trees that we have watched grow and survive all of the adverse Arctic elements. These trees, which have provided beauty (and) enjoyment are no more. Calls were being made to the newspaper and to (Alaska's U.S.) Senator Murkowski. A Fraud, Waste, and Abuse complaint and a Freedom of Information request are pending.

7. (Public Works) decorated the tree. While decorating, a power outage is reported but it has to wait while they finish decorating the Christmas Tree.

8. The Union has been advised that the total costs of the two trees are anywhere from \$14,000 to \$22,000 (over the appraised value (of the trees)). Who to believe? These figures may show only the surface costs. Manhours were also used to escort the military spouse in the selection process, as well as the direction of the work flow, paperwork and eventually the hands-on work at the site. The value of the two trees (\$18,000) (does not) appear in these estimates. (Let us) not forget the upcoming costs of removal/storage/disposal of the decorations, lights, paraphernalia, and the tree itself.

9. The time then came to shift the blame for the poor decisions regarding the Christmas Tree. The natural choice is, of course the (Director of Public Works). I have confirmed that Major (Name withheld from *FAWN* - we will refer to him or her as Major X) X was raked over the coals for not being able to 'control (his/her) people.' This is

assuming that it was a (Public Works) employee who 'blew the whistle.' Since it is against Federal Law to 'control' employees through reprisals for whistle-blowing, it is much to Major X's credit that (he/she) does not 'control' (his/her) people.

"... (Public Works) continues to have manpower shortages, and are normally behind in getting streets and the airfield cleared of snow this time of year. The Infamous Christmas Tree (sic) consumed many manhours and equipment hours at a time when it was most inappropriate. The overall needs of the post were measured against the requirements of one individual and the post came up short. This is one 'holiday project' we could have done without!"

News releases from the Public Affairs Office later pegged the actual cost of installing the top 25 feet of the tree at more than \$16,000! Add that to the \$18,000 value of the two trees, then you have a very impressive \$34,000 Christmas tree.

Problems with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

In a continuing effort to learn from the misfortunes of others, let us consider the plight of several installations found in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

In all of the following cases people acted with good intentions to take care of legitimate problems. In our first example, complaints about Yellow-crowned Night Herons prompted Public Works to begin destroying nests. Despite a warning about the MBTA, workers continued destroying nests. This prompted an anonymous call to a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service agent who began taking statements.

Beware of control methods used for unprotected species. An Air Force base was fined for taking an endangered Peregrine Falcon after it died from eating poison-baited Pigeons.

In another instance, a pesticide applicator was held liable for the death of a flock of geese even though the pesticide had been applied in the prescribed manner. Clearly this is cause for discussion with your pest control co-workers.

The MBTA prohibits a broad litany of acts (hunt, capture, kill, ship, export, barter, etc.) involving any migratory bird, part, nest, product, or egg. This is somewhat misleading since the act

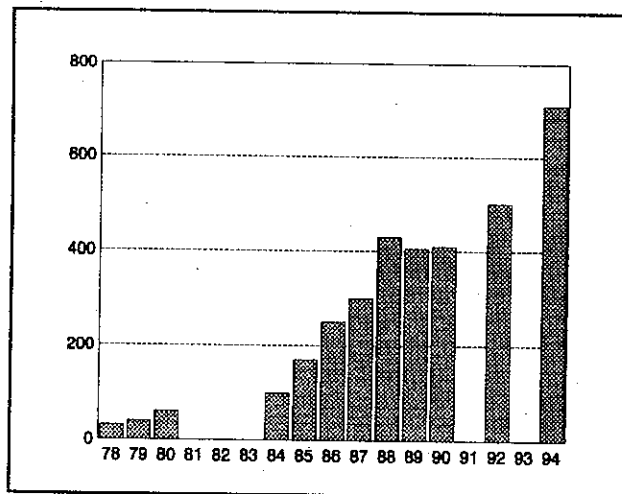
protects species not considered "migratory."

Basically, assume all birds are protected with the exception of Rock Dove (Pigeon), European Starling, and House (English) Sparrow. Yes, even our friend the Brown-headed Cowbird is covered. The act is found in 16 CFR 703, but the list of protected species is in 50 CFR 10.13.

Some innovative techniques are evolving for discouraging birds. Mechanical repellents like Nixalite, Bird Guard or netting may discourage roosting in hangars. Light test monofilament (5 lb) suspended in 3-4 foot lengths closely together has been successful in some cases. It seems to work best when light colored monofilament is used against a light background.

If your installation routinely destroys nests or uses questionable practices to control bird pests, make sure state and Fish & Wildlife officials approve of the methods used. State game agencies or USDA animal damage control will assist in discouraging or relocating specie which are causing problems.

NMFWA'S MEMBERSHIP GROWING



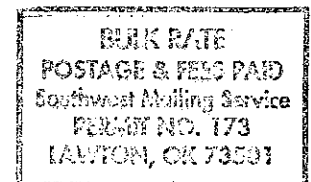
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