



FAWN



FISH AND WILDLIFE NEWS

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THE WILD SIDE

Tom Poole, NMFWA President

The old year is gone and the new year has begun. I hope every member had a happy and peaceful holiday season. I'm still trying to explain to my five year old why Santa Claus couldn't fit a pony in his sleigh.

The 1997 North American Natural Resources Conference will be held in Washington DC at the Omni Shoreham. The program packets with our pre-registration forms were mailed by first class postage in December. Any member that did not receive this packet should contact Thomas Wray III. See the article in this issue for telephone numbers and addresses. There is room in the schedule for more technical papers (hint, hint!). This annual gathering of the clans is the focal point for interaction among Association members.

Jim Gallagher left the federal system for a job with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. I want to thank him again for the fine job he did as Newspaper Editor for the Association. I hope 1997 finds him knee deep in javelinas, with a tall tree close to hand if they get rowdy! Toni Hodgkins and the rest of the Ft.

Sill staff are doing a great job of publishing the FAWN, however, they wouldn't object too strenuously if someone else stepped forward and took this particular load off their shoulders. It's time to look among our ranks for a new editor and a new venue for our publication.

There has been considerable discussion lately among military natural resources managers about an old nemesis. The old Circular A-76 is out and about under the guise of "outsourcing". As budgets and manpower allocations shrink, the pressure to use private contractors to provide government services will grow. The unresolved question is how to determine which functions are inherently governmental and which are subject to cost comparison and subsequent outsourcing. Some of us oldtimers recall the tremendous amount of money and effort expended in the mid-1980's to prepare detailed statements of work for cost comparisons. Don't rest on your laurels! Be ready and able to provide clear and precise information about

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what it is you do, how you do it and how your efforts support the military mission. I'm sure the policy session at our annual meeting will contain information about this and other important issues. See you at the Omni in March.

NMFWA DISCUSSION GROUP AT THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY MEETING

by Mark Hagan

An NMFWA discussion group meeting was held during the Annual Conference of the Wildlife Society in Cincinnati, Ohio, 3-5 October 1996. The NMFWA session was held from 1800 to 1930 on 3 October and was attended by 26 DoD personnel. Mark Hagan (Secretary/Treasurer) chaired the session and was assisted by Wanda Deal (Western Regional Director) and Chester Martin (At-Large Director).

The meeting was begun with introductions by attendees. Installations and officers represented included Edwards AFB, Camp Roberts, Fort Stewart, USAF BASH Team, Fort McCoy, Naval Air Facility-Adak, West Point, Waterways Experiment Station (WES), and Construction Engineering Research Laboratories (CERL).

Dave Tazik (CERL) presented an overview of the military paper session scheduled for Friday afternoon, 4 October. The session consists of 12 presentations representing various aspects of wildlife research on military lands. Also, the poster session on October 5th included 20 posters describing research and management efforts on military installations.

A motion was made and carried to plan another military paper session for the 1997 TWS meeting, Scheduled for 21-27 September in Snowmass, Colorado. Six potential topics areas were suggested for the floor. A vote was held to determine the topic to be recommended to the NMFWA Board of Directors. The topic chosen was "The Role of Military Lands in Ecosystem Management." Chester agreed to chair the session and will develop a proposal to be submitted to TWS 15 October 1996. Co-chairs will include Dave Tazik and Tom Poole.

A discussion was held on the merits of establishing a formal DoD Military Lands Working Group as part of TWS annual meetings. No action was taken, but was agreed to hold further discussions of this issue at the next official business meeting of the NMFWA.

A general discussion was held on the FY97

NMFWA annual meeting and training session, scheduled for 17-21 March 1997 in Washington, D.C. Mark Hagan stated that the associations was still looking for presentations for this meeting. Jim Beemer (West Point) urged contributions for the Aquatics Session, which will also include wetland issues; please call Jim at (914) 938-2314 if you have any ideas for presentations. Wanda Deal is looking for ideas and contributions for the Show-and-Tell session and is encouraging more people to bring regional food items.

DOD HOLDS FORESTRY WORKSHOP AT THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS NATIONAL CONVENTION

by Scott Smith

Approximately 70 DoD foresters and natural resources managers attended the SAF convention in Albuquerque, NM on November 14, 1996. The workshop was hosted by the US Army Environmental Center. Following the opening comments, each of the four services presented an overview report and current fiscal standing. Daniel B. Botkin, Professor of Biology at George Mason University in Virginia, was the featured speaker. His presentation Forest Sustainability: Forests are not Strawberry Preserves dealt with preservation and conservation concepts, implementation and results related to Ecosystem Management.

Leslie Weldon, USDA Forest Service, spoke about her role in the recently established position as Liaison to the Army Environmental Center in Edgewood, MD. The cooperative partnership is designed to provide project-level NEPA analysis, technical and planning support for completing Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans and implementing natural resources programs. Coordination and information sharing with national forests, research, state and private forestry programs. She is not limited to working only with Army programs, but is available to work with all DoD programs. Her phone number is (410)612-7078 or DSN 584-7078.

Bill Burkman, USDA Forest Service, described the USFS Forest Health Monitoring Program which includes the following elements: inventory plot design, detection monitoring, evaluation monitoring, regional implementation, forest health reporting and interagency cooperation. Contact your closest USFS Regional Office for more information about this program.

Staff Forester Walter Briggs, Northwestern

Engineering Field Activity, Poulsbo, WA shared practical, experiences and the benefits of utilizing the Student Conservation Association. For information about the SCA and how to establish a Cooperative Agreement contact Walter at (306) 396-0922 or DSN 744-0922.

Major Dave Walls, USMC, gave a status report of the recent developments of the DoD Wildlands Fire Policy. This effort is its third year; progress is being made toward consensus.

Supervisory Forester Bruce Mann, and Kim Majerus, CERL, spoke about the design and implementation of a fully integrated Geographic Information System for Fort Polk, LA. The system can be regularly updated by the natural resources staff via a Local Area Network.

Rhett Johnson, Auburn University, described the Longleaf Pine Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance is to publicize and promote existing programs and to develop new cooperative efforts that promote the ecological and economic values of the longleaf ecosystems. Through the team effort of the Alliance members, the goals to encourage better management practices and to reverse the decline of the longleaf ecosystems can be achieved. Longleaf Alliance members include private landowners, forest industries, state and federal agencies, conservation groups, university researchers and outreach personnel. For more information about the Alliance call Rhett at (334) 222-7779

Natural Resources Chief Rick McWhite described the longleaf pine restoration efforts at Eglin Air Force Base, FL. Eglin AFB holds the largest contiguous stand of mature and old growth longleaf pine in the southeast. Current focus is on restoration of this species by replacing the vast sand pine plantations established decades ago. Other efforts involve several public agencies and private conservation groups attempting to determine unique forest stand dynamics for future management.

Michael Herbaugh informed the group about his experiences beginning with his work as a biologist at the base level emphasizing his first hand knowledge of natural resources management issues. he expressed his interest to help review any issues offered up from the audience. His phone number is DSN 664-9294 or (703) 604-9294.

HQ ACC Natural Resources Manager Jim Sabo initiated a discussion on the Air Force initiative to outsource (*transfer of a function to an outside provider*)

through cost comparison all functions not critical for sustaining readiness. The goal is to reduce both civilian and military positions and therefore reduce costs. The Air Force MAJCOM "Jump Start" process objective is to develop a program by 1 Jul 97 and to cost compare the functions by Fiscal Year 03. Positions not to be cost compared are Explosive Ordnance Disposal, fire protection, Environmental Advisors, and Quality Assurance Evaluators due to legal and other reasons. Some program managers do not interpret the language in the Sikes Act as exempting natural resources management responsibilities from the cost comparison process. This is the third iteration of its kind in many decades. Suggestions from the audience included requesting the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association to get involved by writing to DoD program managers and other appropriate agencies in order to maintain Legislative purpose of the Sikes Act.

1997 DOD FISH AND WILDLIFE TRAINING SESSIONS

by Thomas Wray II

Final arrangements are being made for the 1997 DoD Fish and Wildlife Training Sessions. This year's meeting has a lot to offer. Early arrival provides many benefits -- a communication workshop, an Icebreaker, a field trip to the Secret Service Training Facility and National Wildlife Visitor Center, and many fine technical presentations at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. Some come early and partake.

You should have already received our preregistration package stuffed full of information. It hopefully answered all your questions. If not, please contact Thomas Wray (DSN 249-4186, COM (540) 653-4186) or Marjorie McHenry (DSN 442-4180, COM (208) 422-4180). A tentative agenda is offered on the next page to wet your appetite.



Sunday 16 March

0800-1600 Communication Workshop
1700-1900 NMFVA Board of Directors Meeting
1700-2200 Committee Room Available
1800-2000 NMFVA Registration Desk

Monday 17 March

0800-0900 NMFVA Registration Desk
1600-1800 NMFVA Registration Desk
1700-2200 Committee Room Available
1800-2000 Icebreaker

Tuesday 18 March

0800-1700 Scheduled Field Trip
1600-1800 NMFVA Registration Desk
1700-2200 Committee Room Available

Wednesday 19 March

0800-0930 NMFVA Registration Desk
0930-1000 Welcome and Announcements
1000-1130 Technical Session 1: Aquatic
Ecosystems: A Different World
1130-1300 Lunch
1300-1430 Technical Session 2: Exotic Species
on DoD Lands
1430-1450 Break
1450-1700 DoD Policy Session
1800-1900 "New Board" Meeting
1900-2200 Show and Tell Reception

Thursday 20 March

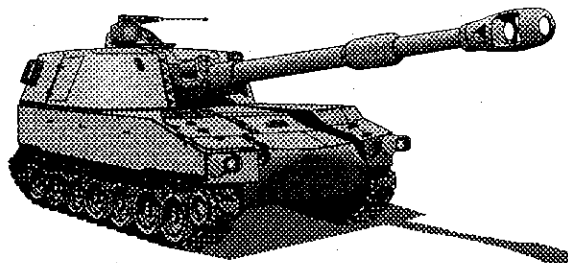
0730-0800 NMFVA Registration Desk
0800-0930 Technical Session 3: Biodiversity &
Ecosystem Management
0930-1000 Break
1000-1200 NMFVA Business Meeting
1200-1300 Lunch
1300-1430 Technical Session 4: Field Notes
1430-1500 Break
1500-1700 NMFVA Board of Directors Meeting
1800-???? Reception and Awards Banquet

Friday 21 March

0830-1200 Service Break-out Sessions

UPCOMING NMFVA SHOW-N-TELL

I had great visions of tying us all together when I took office as one of your Western Regional Directors this year. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to try. We have great potential as an organization and I am very proud to be affiliated with it and each of you. I feel if we all work towards our common goal as a team we will leave our footprints in the annals of great stewardship. I feel we have a really good shot through the "show-n-tell" at getting the word out as to what each of us, as individual bases are doing. We also have a really great opportunity being in Washington DC this year to strut our stuff - so to speak. This avenue gives us the opportunity to network with each other individually and share with each other things which mean something to us from our areas. In the past we have had food, projects, vacations, photo displays, videos, etc. This year I would still encourage us to do that (vacations are especially fun, I think). I would propose each of us also come to the NMFVA gathering with one or more projects, successes or failures (ha! none are really failures - always a good lesson if not for us for someone else) in our head or already written out, maybe even with a photo if your ambitious. What I see is a wall or display boards (I have several I can bring) which we can plaster our story titles on the share with each other. This will give all an opportunity to browse the "bases" bibliography" so to speak. Since the name of the base (of course) and the individual bringing this to our show-n-tell is attached it will help us each to find the base/person of interest and discuss the issue in depth. Can't you just see it! A whole wall papered with our accomplishments and activities for the last year or the last several years. Now mind you this is in ADDITION to our regular sharing activities SO...don't you guys bail out on that!! And by the way I could use some more interested speaking, video, photo showing food sharing show-n-tellers! This year we have TWO, count them two, rooms side by side for our event! This will allow us to take full advantage of the evening. We can network and visit as much as we want in one room and listen and watch in the other.



So to wind this up - either send me your activity titles you would like on our show-n-tell wall via snail mail (Environmental Management, 5 East Popson Ave, Edwards AFB, CA 93524-1130) or fax (DSN 524-6145, COM (805) 227-6145), by phone DSN 527-1426 (v-mail sucks so please persevere) or even by e-mail (dealw%em@mhs.elan.af.mil) which only take you 5 minutes or less. Otherwise come prepared to be asked at the registration table!! See ya in March my friends! Ya make me proud to be a part of you.

THE VIEW FROM OSD

by L. Peter Boice

Communications! It's vital to so much of what we do, at home, at work, at play. With ever greater amounts of information available, and through an ever-increasing variety of sources, it's critical to maintain effective communications across the entire DoD Conservation team. Consequently, I'm pleased to announce several new initiatives which should enhance this goal.

First, Conservation is now on-line with its own Web site, part of the newly expanded and enhanced Environmental Security homepage. While still under development, the Conservation site already offers easy access to many useful documents, including the brand new handbook, "Conservation Biodiversity on Military Lands." Major sections on the Web site include a Conservation overview; Conservation metrics; requirements and milestones, including Executive orders, laws and statutes; DoD policies, memoranda of agreement, speeches and testimony; and publications and videos. Links to other systems, including The Nature Conservancy's State Heritage Data Base, will be added soon. Access is through DENIX, or through the OSD Acquisition Web site at <http://www.acq.osd.mil/> You will need a DoD identification number to access some information.

Second, we have just announced the next DoD-wide Conservation Workshop, which will be held in conjunction with, and immediately following, the American Defense Preparedness Association's annual Environmental Symposium in New Orleans. The Workshop will run from approximately noon, Thursday, April 10, 1997, through 5:00 p.m., Friday, April 11. Cost will be approximately \$75. A tentative agenda will be available by mid-January. Topics under consideration include the new Conservation Instruction and Strategy; outsourcing; overseas governing standards; Regional

Executive Offices and conservation issues; use of the Biodiversity conservation handbook; migratory bird studies; Legacy program update; prescribed burning and air quality issues; wildland fire issues; curation needs assessment and partnership development; and historic building inventories. The focus of this and future Workshops will be on policy, rather than technical, issues. Our goal is to provide a supplement to existing, more technical and subject-specific training opportunities, such as the NMFWA's annual training session.

BIODIVERSITY - WHAT IS IT?

by Don Pitts

Biodiversity has become on the latest buzz words in our field, and in some cases the word even creeps into our position descriptions and performance appraisals. I've found funding targeted for *Biodiversity* comparatively easier to get than for other areas. In some circles, just uttering the word creates smiles and aaah's in reverence of the latest in biological chic.

Yes, I have Biodiversity projects, but I spend some time questioning them. Change is nice, variety is nice, but I submit that only change which redirects an ecosystem to native climax vegetation state is justified with this funding. Introducing new varieties or species for the purpose of Biodiversity is really nothing more than anthropocentric landscaping and is in fact the nemesis of true natural resources management.

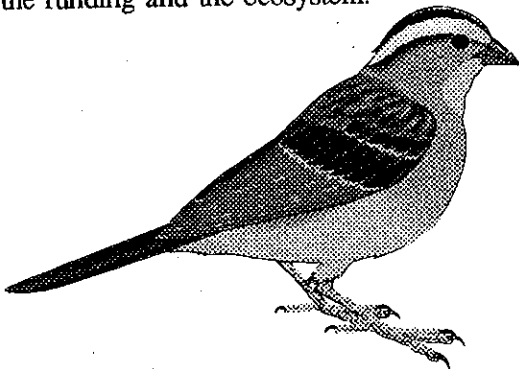
An example of this would be the new, improved pasture grasses in a range situation. Essentially, these grasses are really cash crops. They require additional expense for installation and maintenance, and in virtually all cases survival is dependent in more optimal conditions. These grasses, by nature of their cultivation, seriously decrease biodiversity. Seedbed preparation does the majority of damage, but thickness of the planting and their genetically enhanced self-propagation finish the job. The end result is a uniform field of non-native vegetation. It may provide good though expensive grazing for cattle and horses (sheep and goats prefer biodiversity), but the advantage is often-lived.

Native plants, often less desirable ones (for agricultural and wildlife purposes) will invade improved pastures, requiring periodic straying or re-seeding. An even worse-case scenario exists when weather conditions become unusually harsh for the region. In this case, the introduced species will normally not survive, leaving the field either barren, or subject to

dominance by invader and opportunist species.

While I used grasses as the example, there is equal pressure for species introduction in forest and even wetlands. Those seeking forestry profits or just perverse aesthetics are prone to favor introduction of non-native, selected species. Many modern forestry practices are, of course, the antithesis of biodiversity, but there is real pressure to use biodiversity funding to introduce these principles in their species.

We work in an environment of diverse human backgrounds. The myriad of hometowns produces a myriad of ideas of the perfect ecosystem. As professionals, we must adhere to the native standards. Piney woods are out of place in the prairie, birch trees, through beautiful, have no place in the desert. To plant non-natives in the guise of biodiversity is a betrayal of the funding and the ecosystem.



GRASSLAND BIRD COMMUNITIES ON FORT DRUM

by Steven J. Joule

Over the past three decades, grassland bird species have undergone population declines which have been more severe than any other group of birds in North America. Declines for these species, including the Henslow's Sparrow, which is a high priority species of management concerns, have been attributed mostly to loss of habitat, as grasslands undergo successional changes to shrubland and forests. A change in agricultural practices from hay production and grazing to monoculture crops such as alfalfa and corn, has also meant the loss of once suitable habitat.

To maintain the early successional stages required by grassland birds, management techniques, such as grazing, prescribed burning, and mowing are often employed, and these methods have been effective at increasing suitable habitat for many grassland species. However, for species such as the Henslow's Sparrow, which may require tall,

dense, ungrazed vegetation, and standing dead vegetation, these management tools might not produce the optimal habitat. Military training maneuvers may help maintain open grasslands by retarding the growth of trees and shrubs. In addition, the disturbance caused by training is less monosymmetric than that of either fire or mowing, and more effective than grazing at eliminating woody vegetation. Thus, the periodic, large-scale disturbance of terrain caused by military maneuvers may help preserve avian biodiversity in general and Henslow's Sparrow populations in particular.

In 1995, a study was begun on Fort Drum Military Reservation to evaluate the relationships between vegetation structure and the diversity of birds in grasslands used for military training. In the past two field seasons, over 100 species have been detected during censusing, including grassland birds listed as "Threatened" (Henslow's Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Upland Sandpiper) or "Special Concern" (Grasshopper Sparrow, Horned Lark, Vesper Sparrow) in New York State. The nesting status of grassland birds inhabiting training areas is also being assessed. Reproductive success and breeding chronology were determined for Bobolink and Savannah Sparrow, and successful breeding attempts were confirmed for several other species including Henslow's Sparrow, Northern Harrier and Vesper Sparrow. For 1997, bird censusing and vegetation sampling will continue, and plans are to look more closely at the impact of training maneuvers on successional changes.



BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE ON FORT DRUM

by Steven J. Joule

Purple loosestrife is a herbaceous perennial that was first introduced to North America in the early 19th century, and since has become a serious problem in wetland ecosystems. The replacement of native plant species with this exotic weed reduces food and cover for wetland wildlife species, including many species of management concerns, such as American Bittern, Least Bittern, Black Tern, Canvasback, and Bog Turtle. In an attempt to control the expansion of purple loosestrife, several methods have been employed in the past, including hand removal, water level manipulations, mowing, disking, herbicide treatment, and prescribed burning. However, biological control appears to be the most effective method of reversion the proliferation of this exotic plant and maintaining the diversity of native flora in wetland ecosystems.

In 1996, a program was initiated on Fort Drum Military Reservation in cooperation with Cornell University's Biological Control of Non-indigenous plant species program. The objective of this program is to establish a biological control of purple loosestrife through the release of insect species which are natural enemies of the plant. The program employs three highly host-specific European insect species that have been rigorously screened and approved by the USDA and APHIS for introduction in the United States. *Galerucella pusilla* and *G. calmeriensis* are leaf-eating beetles which defoliate the plant, while *Hyllobius transversovittatus* is a root-mining weevil that attacks the storage tissue. Once established, these control agents are expected to drastically reduce the density of purple loosestrife. The eventual goal is a reduction of purple loosestrife at approximately 10% of its current abundance.

In 1997, a rearing facility will be set up on Fort Drum for the propagation of the control agents. It is expected that the quantity of insects produced during the first year of rearing will be sufficient to establish a breeding population that can supply "starter" insects for subsequent rearing efforts, and also serve as a source of control agents for other DOD facilities.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT SHORT COURSE

The 33rd Annual Wildlife Management Short Course will be offered on Colorado State University campus

during the week of March 31-April 4, 1997. This popular course was developed for laypersons or agency personnel with non-wildlife training.

This week-long short course is designed to provide a broad overview of principles of wildlife (including fisheries) ecology and management. Current programs and issues related to natural resources conservation will also be discussed. The short course consists of presentations by University faculty and personnel from various agencies. Field trips involve visits to a fish hatchery and raptor rehabilitation center.

This Short Course is limited to 50 participants. Academic credit is available for participants pending approval.

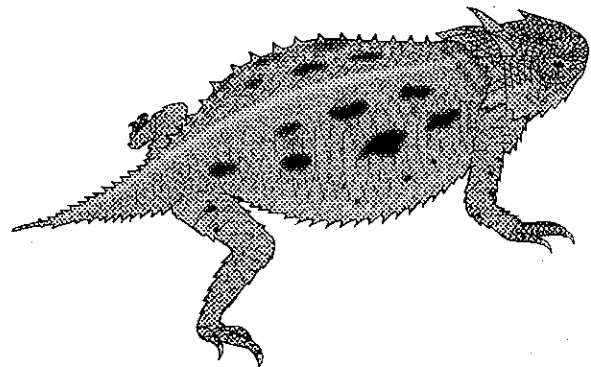
If you wish more information on this course, please contact Eugene Decker, Program Coordinator (970) 491-5656; FAX (970) 491-5091 or the Office of Conference Services (970) 491-7501.

NMFWA POSTER UPDATE

If you have a technical project and would like to have it represented on the Associations Poster at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in March 1997 please contact Mr. Chris Bandy at (719) 576-8074, FAX 8016. If you are interested please send supporting slides or photo's, a narrative, or even a video (if you have one). Let's all pitch in and make this years poster a great one.

EDITOR'S CORRECTION

The NMFWA Financial summary printed in the September 1996 issue of the FAWN should have read Financial Summary for 1995, not 1996.



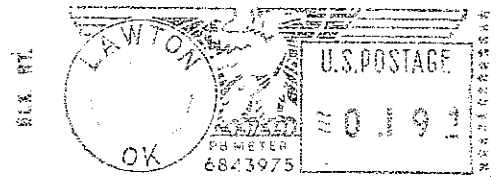
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