



THE WILD SIDE

Don Pitts – NMFVA President
(Donald.Pitts@erdc.usace.army.mil)

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What a difference a day makes! On September 10 we were at peace and our minds were scattered in a myriad of directions, some mundane and some of possibly greater interest or importance. By the evening of the next day, we were focused. We were at war. No, we're not sure where the enemy is, and this conflict is certain to lead our war fighters into several sovereignties, and widely diverse terrain. This is certain to be a long and bloody conflict between civilization and forces of evil. We can't afford to lose.

On installations with flying missions, we'll be using our education and acquired skills to keep the approaches and runways free of birds and other wildlife that threaten aircraft and their crews. After all, when you train to be a wildlife biologist, understanding habitat and results of modification are integral, making you the best qualified for that job.

In land management, we're working to keep the land natural, as close as possible to land our people in uniform will be facing. Sure, training tears up the land, that's a part of war. It's our job to mediate that as quickly as possible, and bring the land back to its natural state. Yes, so they can tear it up again. We'll fix it again.

And while this may seem trite in a time of war, no declaration of emergency or war suspends the laws of the United States of America. They're still out there. We still have the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty and the

Our roles in this war are very well defined, and we are indeed an integral part of the conflict. Our job is, first and foremost, to support military training and the mission. Though some of us do, most of us won't be carrying weapons or flying aircraft. We will, however, be making sure the war fighters train in the most realistic environments possible, and do so as safely as possible.



The Wild Side — continued

multitudinous others that affect our daily lives. In fact, NEPA, the Executive Order on floodplains, wetlands, and bird conservation are still in full effect. No change there.

Yes, we're a nation of laws and those laws still stand in a time of war. And while some may complain, it is our adherence to law and decency that separates us from our enemy. What purpose is there to winning a war if we destroy ourselves in the process? No, as a society we're too smart for that. Our laws and executive orders will stand. We will adhere to them and enforce them, even in time of war.

While we focus on giving the war fighters the best training possible, it is also our job to focus on keeping our forces on the right side of natural resources laws and regulations. Will there be conflicts? Maybe a few. Will we survive? Sure. A commander may think a law is a pain, but few are inclined to be lawbreakers.

Just as our friends in uniform face some major challenges, so do we. They will have the opportunity to show their stuff. So will we. It is our opportunity to show our dedication to training and the mission, while at the same time our dedication to our country by helping our military train on the right side of the law. No true military leader out there will expect less of us.

We do, after all, work for them. Any of us who can't handle that should transfer to the Park Service. And, this is our greatest opportunity to show those in government who favor outsourcing natural resource



management that we should always work for them. We're on that installation everyday, dedicated to enhancing training, safety and the mission for the fighting men and women. It is we who have the years of installation corporate knowledge and dedication to a cause, not a bottom line, that will keep our war fighters safe. Finances, politics and year-to-year renewal questions would hamstring even the most educated, dedicated and skillful contractor.

It is we who have developed the relationships with the regulators over many years that keeps them satisfied with the military conservation efforts. This, my colleagues, allows our military the opportunity to train and train well. We are the lone line of defense between our friends in uniform and those who are sworn to place the species above all other concerns, even military training. We know both training and the species can be saved, but we're often alone in effecting the compromise. Remove us, and there is no one. The regulators win. Training loses.

So my friends, let's show them what we can do. That should be easy; we've spent years doing that. This is one fight we can all win.

**CHECK OUT THE NMFWA
WEB SITE!!
NEW ITEMS APPEAR
FREQUENTLY.....**

**PLEASE FILL OUT THE
ONLINE REGISTRATION
FORM**

**WE NEED YOUR CONTACT
INFORMATION**

**JOIN NMFWA; WORK ON A
COMMITTEE; RUN FOR
OFFICE; BE ACTIVE!!!**

NMFWA AWARD NOMINATIONS NEEDED!!

Nominations for the following NMFWA Awards are now being accepted. Please take the time to nominate those groups or individuals who have helped you to build and support your program.

1. **SUPPORT:** For persons who indirectly assist natural resources.
 - a. **Military Support of Natural Resources.** This area is for military personnel who, through their position, have given support to natural resources programs above the norm.
 - b. **Civilian Support of Natural Resources.** This area is for civilians who have supported natural resources above the norm. Individuals may be employed by DOD or a supporting agency.

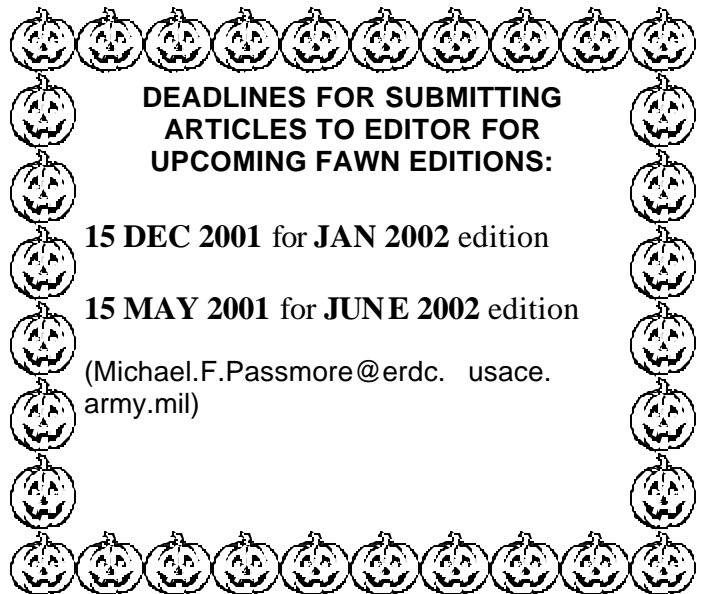
2. **VOLUNTEER:** For a group or an individual assisting in natural resources programs.
 - a. **Education.** This area is to recognize efforts in natural resources education. Includes interpretation, hunter education, troop training by individuals, groups or interagency cooperation.
 - b. **Management.** This area recognizes efforts on an installation that assists program managers in a variety of natural resources projects. This includes research, re-vegetation, fish/wildlife habitat enhancement, and endangered species management by interns, private citizens, groups or organizations.

3. **PROFESSIONAL:** For persons working in natural resources conservation. Includes both DOD and non-DOD employees.
 - a. **Management.** This area covers all aspects of natural resources management. Includes lifetime achievements, special projects, or anything showing great dedication to the profession.
 - b. **Law Enforcement.** This area recognizes any of the wide variety of professions dealing with fish and wildlife law enforcement. Includes game wardens, JAG officers, lawyers, judges etc.
 - c. **Technical.** This area recognizes people who are critical to natural resource management but who often go unrecognized. Individuals may include tractor and heavy equipment operators, biological technicians, clerical, laborers, or others who provide technical services to the program.



NOMINATION INFORMATION: Deadline for nomination submissions is 31 January 2002. No more than one plaque will be given for each category. Runners-up may receive a certificate or NMFWA Presidential congratulatory letter.

POC: Bob Wardwell
 PHONE: (301) 394-1061
 FAX: (301) 394-1386
 ADDRESS: 4222 30th Street, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712



DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING ARTICLES TO EDITOR FOR UPCOMING FAWN EDITIONS:

15 DEC 2001 for JAN 2002 edition

15 MAY 2001 for JUNE 2002 edition

(Michael.F.Passmore@erdc.usace.army.mil)

NMFWA PROGRAM SHAPING UP FOR DALLAS IN 2002

The basic program for the FY02 NMFWA workshop and training session has been set (see agenda). Registration will begin at 1700 hrs on 1 April 02, and a Board of Directors (BOD) meeting will be held that evening. Working Group meetings will be held on Tuesday morning. Times are staggered as follows for the working groups so that members can take advantage of at least two sessions: Herpetology (0800-1000), Invasive Species (0900-1100), and Bat Conservation (1000-1200). A special BASH session will be held from 0800 to 1200 on Tuesday. The DOD session and Service Breakout Sessions are scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

Technical sessions will take place all day Wednesday, from 1600 to 1730 Thursday, and 0800 to 1200 Friday. A Partners in Flight meeting and NMFWA Business Meeting are scheduled for Thursday afternoon. All NMFWA members are strongly encouraged to attend the North American Plenary Session on Thursday morning. North American participants are also encouraged to attend NMFWA sessions. A final BOD meeting will be held Friday afternoon.

Other activities include the Show and Tell Reception Tuesday evening and Awards Banquet Thursday night. Dennis Herbert has arranged an excellent off-site banquet at Shadow Creek Ranch and guarantees that a good time will be had by all (see article on Banquet). According to Dennis, it comes with a catered Bar-B-Q meal so huge that Tom Warren can't even finish it. We will also be able to get our pictures taken with a Long Horn Steer for a modest fee (I know I want a photo of Don and Dennis riding the steer – one could come up with some good captions for that shot). A Newcomer's Breakfast (off-site at Ferris Plaza Restaurant) is also being planned for Wednesday or Thursday morning.

Chester O. Martin (Chester.O.Martin@erdc.usace.army.mil)
Vice-President and Program Chair, NMFWA

PROPOSED TECHNICAL SESSIONS FOR DALLAS 2002

Technical sessions and chairs are listed below. Please contact chairpersons immediately if you are interested in presenting papers. Jim Bailey, Kim Mello, and Scott Belfit are presently in need of several papers to complete their programs. The session chairs must provide their tentative titles and presenters no later than 26 October; abstracts are due in November.

Forestry and Wildlife Management – Where do we Stand?

Chair: Jim Copeland, Naval Air Station Meridian, MS (601-679-2482); jim.copeland@cnet.navy.mil

Coastal Challenges on DOD Installations

Chair: Jim Bailey, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD (410-278-6748); jim.bailey@usag.apg.army.mil

Ethics in DOD Natural Resources Management

Chair: Rich Clewell, U.S. Army Materiel Command, Rock Island, IL (309-782-8252); clewell@ria.army.mil

Encroachment Issues on DOD Lands

Chair: Scott Belfit, U.S. Army Environ.Center, MD (410-436-1556); sbelfit@aec.apgea.army.mil

Range and Prairie Restoration Efforts on Military Installations

Co-chairs: Kim Mello, Fort McCoy, WI (608-388-5766); mellok@mccoy-emh1.army.mil
James Hessel, Fort Huachuca, AZ (520-533-7084); hessilj@huachuca-emh1.army.mil

Managing Ecosystems into the Future

Co-chairs: Dorothy Gibb, Horne Engineering Services, Fairfax, VA (703-641-1100); dgibb@horne.com

Doug Ripley, Air National Guard, Andrews AFB, VA (301-836-8862/8151); douglas.ripley@ang.af.mil

Proposed Dallas Sessions — continued**Field Notes (miscellaneous topics – NEPA, Endangered Species, etc.)**

Co-chairs: Dan Friese, HQ AFCEE/ECC,
Brooks Air Force Base, TX (210-536-3823);
daniel.friese@hqafcee.af.mil;
Mary Anderson, HQ AFCEE/ECC, Brooks Air
Force Base, TX (210-536-3808); mary.anderson@hqafcee.af.mil

**NMFWA MEETING AGENDA
1-5 APRIL 2002, DALLAS, TX**

- 1 April Monday Travel Day
Registration (1700-1845)
BOD Meeting (1900-2200)
- 2 April Tuesday Registration (0645-0745)
Wk Grp Mtgs (0900-1200)
Registration (1215-1245)
DOD Session (1300-1430)
Service Breakout Sessions
(1430-1730)
Registration (1800-1830)
Committee Meetings
(1830-2000)
- 3 April Wednesday Registration (0645-0745)
Technical Sessions
A (0800-1000)
B (1015-1200)
Registration (1215-1315)
C (1330-1515)
D (1530-1730)
Show & Tell (1900-2200)
- 4 April Thursday Registration (0730-0900)
WMI Plenary Session;
(No NMFWA sessions in AM)
Registration (1200-1300)
PIF Meeting (1230-1400)
Business Mtg (1400-1600)
Technical Session E
(1600-1730)
Awards Banquet; off-site
(1830-2200)

5 April Friday

Registration (0645-0745)
Technical Sessions
F (0800-1000)
G (1015-1200)
BOD Meeting (1330-1600)
Field Trips?? (TBD)

'TEXAS' SIZE AWARDS BANQUET

It's several months until NMFWA meets in Dallas, Texas, but plans are well under way. I would like to give the membership some preliminary information and request help at the same time.

The upcoming meeting will be held in Dallas at the Hyatt Regency Reunion Tower, April 1-5, 2002. Chester has a great program lined up and there are numerous sites and activities available in the downtown area during your free time. An off-site location for our awards banquet is being arranged which seems to be desired by many from past years conversations. This and other information will be placed on the association web site (<http://www.nmfw.org/>), so visit it often. Subsequent communications with the membership via the web site will cover topics such as the Hyatt and alternate hotels, downtown Dallas, entertainment, restaurants, transportation, visitor center and sites, and potential field trips.

Awards banquet is scheduled for Thursday evening, 4 April 2002 at Shadow Creek Ranch (Old Fort Dallas), which is a replica of an 1800's old Texas town (very authentic). They provide transportation to and from the Hyatt downtown. The Wildflower Room, a huge air-conditioned room that also has an old west town inside the building is scheduled. Everyone bring their camera, plenty of photo ops inside the Wildflower as well as around town. A Texas style and Texas size catered Bar-B-Q meal is planned. I think everyone will enjoy himself or herself.

I also need your help as soon as you can. To get a preliminary count of those attending the banquet please email me if you plan to attend the awards dinner. (dennis.Herbert@hood.army.mil or dherb254@vvm.com) I am trying to save association funds by having as accurate a count as possible of the attendance. Also, please express your desire, via the same means, of attending a field trip on Saturday 6 April to the Dallas Nature Center or Cedar Hill State Park. Watch the web site for further information but both are good birding areas, among other things, (Black-capped Vireo and Golden-cheeked Warbler) that time of the year.

Dennis M. Herbert (dennis.Herbert@hood.army.mil)
Host Chairman, 2002 NMFWA Conference

Director At-Large Report

Following the template of my last four or five newsletter articles (if you consider my Western Regional Director reports from last year), my activities as Director at Large have primarily involved our website, www.nmfwa.org. Many of our members visit the site, many do not. More than 12,000 site visits in the last 12 months! Sure, Amazon beats that in a day, but ...

I have a simple question of those who do stop by nmfwa.org while surfing: What would you like us to change? And of those who rarely, if ever, go to the site: What would make you increase your visitation?

The site changes several times per month. Recently, we've added preliminary 2002 meeting information. The "DoD Hit list" is posted (I'm confident this subject is discussed elsewhere in this issue, so I'll yield to that discussion). Perhaps the most significant change of recent months is the brand new "Jobs and Employment" section. We've enhanced the links to include several job boards, and there's a new bulletin board devoted solely to vacancy announcements and closely related materials. If you post a vacancy, please do me a favor and include to closing date (if any) in the subject line. We could also start up a resume review service for members -- ask folks who hire people to critique your resume. In short, the possibilities of the jobs bulletin board alone are almost endless.

The "regular" bulletin board is fully operational once again, and it is a resource that is woefully underutilized. This is an opportunity to prevent you from "Reinventing the Wheel." Ask questions, engage in detailed discussions of methodology, announce conferences and meetings! This bulletin board also can serve many purposes, the sky is the limit.

The Herpetology Working Group has the projects database in a downloadable file. Which installation has conducted work on what species? Before you start a project, learn about the potential pitfalls from someone who has done similar work at another location. Get copies of their results, just by looking up the project POC. By the way, Tessa Bashore and Jay Rubinoff both deserve a lot of credit for making this beast available!

So, in summary, let me know what would make the entire site more useful. Two-thousand site visits per month is well within reach! The more use we get, the better it is for all of us! Bookmark it, use the bulletin boards and check the site out often! I promise you, it really does change, several times EVERY MONTH! Thanks!

Rhys M. Evans (evansrm@29palms.usmc.mil)

Partners in Flight Meeting In Dallas

The DoD Partners in Flight program will have a meeting at the spring NMFWA workshop on Thursday, 4 April 2002, from 12:30-14:00. We will presenting the newly revised and updated Strategic Plan, and will have copies to hand out to all attendees. We will not be having formal presentations on projects, as we did in Washington, DC, this past year.

If you are interested in knowing more about bird conservation activities within DoD, or would like to become involved, we welcome your attendance. For more information, contact Chris Eberly, DoD PIF Program Manager, at ceberly@dodpif.org or 540-253-5675.



TWS Meetings A Success!!!

Though recent terrorist activities (and the future military response) may have altered the plans of some, a record-breaking attendance of more than 2000 biologists proved that extremists cannot change our way of life. I'm referring to the 8th Annual national meeting of The Wildlife Society, held in Reno, Nevada in September. As many of you know, TWS tends to attract "trench biologists" more than policy wonks -- though both groups are important to us and the environment.



More than 300 papers and 150 posters were presented. Special symposia on bison, sage grouse and bats attracted impressive audiences. A phenomenal photo contest (including digital images for the first time) had more than 200 entries. And of course, the Quiz Bowl: The quiz bowl is a fast-paced, very humbling competition on all things wildlife between teams of four students from universities far and wide. This year, thirteen teams competed. For the last two years, I've opined that my Alma Mater (Humboldt State in Northern California) would have most certainly won if only they had competed. Eureka! This year, they competed, and won! Colorado State came in a strong second place. (Thanks to Jim Beemer and Jean O'Neill for serving as judges).

I must of course say that the educational opportunities were the clear highlight of the meeting, but the awesome Lake Tahoe Beach Party on Saturday night was also unforgettable. Sunset over the bluest lake in the world...

Hope to see you next year at the 9th Annual in Bismarck, North Dakota (unfortunately, it is also scheduled in late September...).

Rhys Evans (evansrm@29palms.usmc.mil)

NMFWA MEETING AT RENO

A non-voting NMFWA General Business meeting was held on 26 September 2001 at the TWS meeting in Reno, Nevada.

Sixteen persons were in attendance: Mark Hagan, Junior Kerns, Gary Cottle, Jean O'Neil, Bert Bivings, Alan Leary, Mike Passmore, Hildy Reiser, Tim Beaty, Rhys Evans, Jim Beemer, Sheridan Stone, Chester Martin, Dianna Higginson, Rich Fischer, Don Pitts

Jim Beemer was recognized for his fashion statement at this meeting (very professional attire).

Don Pitts—

- a) Most efforts this year put toward the outsourcing issue. Noted that most NMFWA respondents to the PEER survey indicated they were satisfied with their natural resources program, but were concerned about converting federal positions to contract. Beemer is working to get the NRA to weigh in on the outsourcing issue.
- b) Noted the passing of the motion to provide \$2500 to WMI for sponsorship of the 2002 meeting.
- c) Provided clarification that we provided \$1000 to sponsor the Western Chapter of TWS meetings instead of the national meeting here in Reno; Evans will check on the apparent mix-up.
- d) Hagan suggested that the money being sent to WMI could be better spent with other agencies; Pitts suggested that a motion could be made on this issue in Dallas.

Rhys Evans—

We are getting about 1500 hits per month on our website; all members should be encouraged to visit it frequently.

Junior Kerns—

His DOD list will be up and running within a couple of weeks after his computer switch. The proposed DOD Natural and Cultural Resources meeting in Tucson AZ looks like it may make it.

NMFWA Business Meeting— continued

Jim Beemer—

- a) Submitted a 70 page document on the outsourcing case; Thomas Wray also submitted an excellent document.
- b) Herp working group has a database up on the website. Also, Herp management guidelines have been approved by the Board of Directors; the guidelines will be submitted to DOD for approval as the standard. He can provide copies.
- c) The ad hoc Bylaws committee will bring recommendations for change to the membership in Dallas. The issue of making state/federal employees voting members will be addressed there.
- d) He is developing a military lands aquatic technical session for the 2002 Fisheries Society meeting in Baltimore (23-27 August). The deadline for title and abstract submission to him is 15 November.
- e) Bill Woodson is working the system to identify specific positions to be exempt under outsourcing; we are still working on getting language inserted in the Defense Bill to place a moratorium on the outsourcing actions.

Chester Martin—

- a) Reviewed the agenda for the Dallas meeting.
- b) Field trips are still being setup; general feeling was that we likely won't be able to fit those into the meetings.
- c) Concern was expressed about our banquet overlapping with WMI's.
- d) Best paper award will be announced after the meeting because some papers will be presented after our award ceremony.
- e) Working groups are scheduled for 3 hours on Tuesday; may try to stagger those to allow more participation.
- f) He will work through Fischer to coordinate the PIF meeting; they may need at least a half-day.

- g) Show and Tell session (and silent auction) will need volunteers for Coralie Cobb. We have a larger room and some high quality items. (Pitts offered to bring some "abstract art") We need to clarify guidelines for outside vendors at the Show and Tell.
- h) Awards Banquet will be held off-site at the Shadow Creek Ranch; huge BBQ meal; approximately \$40-45 per person (includes transportation). General agreement that this was a very reasonable price.
- i) Several technical sessions are undecided; more papers are needed.
- j) A "newcomers" breakfast is being planned for Dallas.
- k) Pitts will organize a "President's Party" in Dallas.

Mark Hagan—

Raised a concern about not having a "new" BOD informal meeting in Dallas. It was agreed that would be worked between Martin and Beemer.

Don Pitts—

We should recognize that Martin is having to "lay new groundwork" dealing with the new WMI agenda.

Junior Kerns—

We should open our technical sessions to WMI.

President Pitts closed the meeting at 7pm.

Mike Passmore (Michael.F.Passmore@erdc.usace.army.mil)



North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Wetlands Grant Workshop

As part of the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) annual training, a NAWCA Wetland Grant Workshop was held at 3:00 p.m. on 18 March 2001. This workshop was held in the Capitol Room of the Omni-Shoreham hotel, Washington, D.C. Ms. Bettina Sparrowe was the instructor for the workshop.

All of the information presented in the following notes plus additional information can be obtained from the internet web site:

<http://birdhabitat.fws.gov>. There were two handouts provided, one which was the North American Wetlands Conservation Act United States Standard Grant Application Instructions and information from the web site titled "Division of Bird Habitat Conservation: U.S. Standard Grants."

For NAWCA projects, the emphasis is on partnerships. Good partners or many partners are typically better. A partner is a generic term; it can be any organization. DoD dollars are not necessary. In kind services, such as time and labor, can be used. DoD should approve of projects involving the military, or at least approve of the project. The project does not necessarily have to be on a military base for there to be a benefit to DoD. For example, there could be a project for wetlands that also decreases the Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) potential of an area.

Projects can include acquisition, restoration, or enhancement. Joint Ventures under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan (NAWMP) are important allies in the NAWCA process. They can help identify partners. They can provide information on various aspects of the program. If the project is in a Joint Venture, they will rank it against other

submitted proposals. The term joint venture has been adopted by many groups of people or organizations working toward a similar cause.

There has to be nonfederal matching funds for the project. Nonfederal can be private, local, state or even tribal funds, as long as they are not appropriated by Congress or are specifically noted as being able to be used to match Federal grants. If using past projects for matching funds, then the funds cannot be more than two years old from the time the proposal is submitted. Grant money goes to the project officer, which could be a DoD or nonfederal entity (i.e. Ducks Unlimited). Each partner submitting matching funds must submit a letter. If a partner is not putting in matching funds then no letter should be submitted (i.e., general support letters are not wanted).

There are seven Technical Assessment Questions that are used to score proposals. Acquisition can include leases and other real estate transfers, but long-term deals are preferred. The primary focus is on migratory birds. They will consider wastewater treatment plants and ponds if they benefit migratory birds.

It is important for a NAWCA project to be part of a wetland or migratory bird conservation plan. There are four plans that most proposals are submitted under. These plans are the NAWMP, Shorebird Management Plan, North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (colonial waterbirds), and Partners in Flight (songbirds).

It is possible to get funding for upland habitats if they are associated with wetlands (i.e., a project that is designed to create nesting habitat for ducks or shorebirds). Or a project that can be tied to watershed/ecosystem management can qualify for wetland grants. It is possible to do projects involving invasive species control however, it is better if this is a component of, rather than the entire, project. Research and public access projects are not eligible as match or for NAWCA grant funds. They can't fund anyone meeting their federal mitigation requirements. However, local and state mitigation projects may be funded. They have funded projects under CERCLA clean up.

Small grants have the same sections in the proposal application, but less information is required than in the standard Grants.

Wetlands Grant Workshop — continued

To date, no Department of Defense (DoD) projects have been funded. They have been getting approximately 40 million dollars per year for grants in the 3 countries (Canada, U.S. and Mexico). They are no year funds and don't need to be spent in the same fiscal or calendar year they were received. Once the funds are received, all work must be done under federal contract guidelines.

Small grant proposals are submitted during December. Standard grant proposals are submitted during March and July. Grant funds are received from regular appropriations, migratory bird fines, and other miscellaneous sources.

Ms. Sparrowe went over an example grant proposal. The proposal summary includes the project summary, partners, etc. and needs to be well written. It is an important element of the proposal. There is currently allowance for a Matching Contribution Plan that, if approved, can be used to extend matching funds beyond the two-year deadline. However, the utility of the Match Plan is currently under review and may be done away with in the future. Both small and large-scale maps are needed in the proposal. They like to see tract information if it is available. Restoration is defined as taking a wetland from nonfunctional to functional. Restoration projects count more heavily than enhancement projects. The National Wetlands Inventory is used to identify types and status of wetlands. Both State and Federally listed threatened and endangered species are considered during the scoring of proposals. In the past this has often driven the funding of projects. The more diversity in the partners is better. Really good projects score in the 80's and most projects score in the 70's out of a maximum total of 100 points.

You can use other grant funds as match for a NAWCA project, if they are non-federal. However, you cannot use non-federal funds as match if they have been successfully used to match another Federal grant. But two grant proposals can be submitted at the same time for different projects. Some annual maintenance projects (such as burning) may be funded because they are also considered to be restoration or enhancement. Normally, operations and maintenance are not funded.

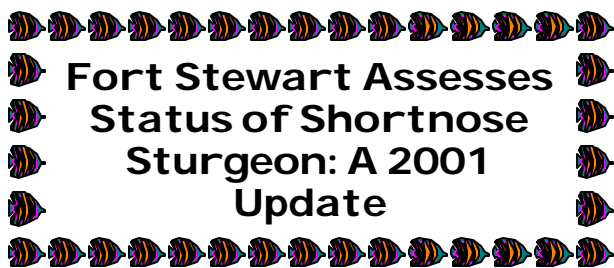
Proposals can include non-matching funds, such as labor, if it's really important to explain the project, even though not directly relevant to obtaining matching funds. They usually want some federal partner, even if not putting in matching funds.

There was some discussion on using Sikes Act and other non-appropriated dollars as matching federal funds. We need to determine whether these funds are eligible as NAWCA match. After the meeting, further investigation indicates that hunting and fishing, forestry, and agricultural outlease funds can be used as federal matching funds, because they are considered non-appropriated funds. Agricultural outlease funds have the fewest restrictions on what they can be used for. Hunting and fishing funds can usually be used to support wetland projects. Forestry funds have the most limited use, but there could be occasion when they can be used for wetland grant matching funds.

It was an excellent workshop. The NMFWA thanks Ms. Bettina Sparrowe for taking the time to explain the opportunities and process for obtaining wetland grants.

Mark Hagan (mark.hagan@edwards.af.mil)




**Fort Stewart Assesses
Status of Shortnose
Sturgeon: A 2001
Update**

*Thomas D. Bryce (FSGA), Joel E. Fleming (FSGA),
Dr. James P. Kirk (WES, USCOE)*

Biologists at Fort Stewart, Georgia, have a better handle on the status of the endangered shortnose sturgeon after 2 years of intensive sampling, but many questions and challenges remain in their efforts to protect and enhance this unique species.

Fort Stewart's Fish and Wildlife Branch continues to monitor the shortnose sturgeon population in the Ogeechee River system in keeping with their Endangered Species Management Plan (ESMP). After an initial inventory and population assessment in the early 1990's, follow-up monitoring was deemed necessary to evaluate trends and better describe this small population since the installation is a significant land manager within the Ogeechee River basin. The Ogeechee River forms the eastern boundary of the post while its largest tributary, the Canoochee River, flows diagonally through the installation and its Artillery Impact Area.

Studies in the early 1990's revealed a population that was characterized as being depressed (approximately 266 individuals) with limited recruitment, while critical spawning and rearing habitats remained unidentified. Preliminary results suggested that activities on Fort Stewart were not likely to adversely affect the sturgeon, but additional monitoring was deemed necessary. To fulfill the requirements of the ESMP, the Fort Stewart Fish and Wildlife Branch and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineer Research and Development Center entered into a second phase of monitoring in 1999

to better understand the status and biology of both shortnose and juvenile Atlantic sturgeon in the Ogeechee River. This later effort has been designed to evaluate population trends, locate critical summering, spawning and rearing habitat, assess age structure and growth rates, determine mortality rates, collect tissue samples for genetic studies, and predict population responses to fluctuations in recruitment. Several years ago, the NMFS looked into federally listing the Atlantic sturgeon, but the data at the time called for monitoring and reconsideration at a later time. Since both species share habitat, the Fort Stewart biologists agreed to collect data on any incidental Atlantic sturgeon captures.

Under permit from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the installation conducts gillnet sampling from late May through early October. In 1999, over 6,900 net-meter hours were expended using experimental gillnets resulting in the capture of 21 shortnose sturgeon and 46 juvenile Atlantic sturgeon. In 2000, weather conditions favored the concentration of shortnose sturgeon in deep, cool water summer habitat and after 6,200 net-meter hours 68 individual shortnose were captured. Only 21 juvenile Atlantics were collected in 2000. All sturgeon are tagged using a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) tag, and simultaneously tagged with a U.S. Fish and Wildlife numbered anchor tag. NMFS allows the tagging of 20 shortnose individuals a year with radio/ultrasonic tags for tracking purposes. In addition, a small section of the right pectoral spine is removed for age and growth determination and a tissue sample is collected for genetic evaluation.



Biological technician Craig Crumbley holding an adult shortnose sturgeon.

Ft. Stewart Sturgeon— continued

Shortly, into the 1999 sampling season, short-nose sturgeon with South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) tags began to show up in the catch. A total of three fish in 1999 and five fish in 2000 were identified through tags as being cultured by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and released between 1990 and 1992, at age 1, into the Savannah River. After aging the fish from the 1999 and 2000 sampling seasons, it was determined that a significant proportion of the Ogeechee River 8-plus year old shortnose adults were immigrants from the released South Carolina cultured fish. Among the 1999 age 8 fish, 50% were SCDNR fish, and of the 2000 age 9 fish and age 11 fish, 31% and 50%, respectively, were SCDNR shortnose. Of the 97,000 shortnose cultured and released by SCDNR, only 17,000 were tagged.

Consequently, more of the age 8-plus fish could have been SCDNR released fish. These findings would strongly suggest that the stocked fish make up a significant portion of the population and were it not for the SCDNR introductions, the resident Ogeechee River shortnose population would be even smaller than currently assessed levels.

The number of recaptured shortnose from fish tagged in this study is used to determine population estimates. No shortnose recaptures occurred in 1999, however 28 shortnose were recaptured in 2000, and 5 of these were from the 1999-tagged fish (i.e., almost 20% of those fish collected in 1999). Consequently, population estimates reflected a small adult population estimated at 195 (with a 95% CI of 143-306). This population estimate does not differ significantly from the 1993 estimate. Therefore, the adult shortnose sturgeon population is believed to be either stable or slightly decreasing.

Based on population estimates, calculated mortality rates and assessed growth rates, the Ogeechee shortnose population is deemed

very recruitment-limited. Consequently, small fluctuations in annual recruitment of young fish into the population will significantly influence population levels. Predictive models reflect that 30 recruits annually will maintain the population, less than 30 recruits will shrink the population, while 60 annual recruits will double the population over a 30 year period. The Ogeechee River population could rapidly become extinct if mortality increases or recruitment decreases. Therefore, population trends should be carefully tracked in the future. If the NMFS and the Recovery Team approve the stocking of cultured fish, then the population could be sustained and increased until the limiting factors are determined and corrected to support natural population growth.

Annual monitoring, tagging and tracking will continue in the years ahead to further evaluate population trends, population health, and fish movement. To date, no radio/ultrasonic tagged fish have made spawning runs. Consequently, the Fort Stewart biologists are still uncertain as to the location and condition of the spawning grounds. Possible factors affecting the shortnose sturgeon are: (1) the depletion of underlying aquifers that may be reducing summering shortnose sturgeon habitat (i.e., deep holes with artesian seeps), (2) water quality degradation (i.e., nutrient loading, turbidity, low dissolved oxygen, contaminants), (3) possible by-catch impacts from the State-permitted American shad gillnet fishery, or (4) possible spawning/nursery habitat degradation, both of which remain unidentified at this time.

The Fort Stewart Fish and Wildlife Branch presented the above findings at the 4th International Sturgeon Symposium held in Oshkosh, WI, this past July. The installation and the Army were praised by the international community for their proactive conservation efforts in supporting the recovery of this unique species.

Thomas Bryce (Tom.Bryce@stewart.army.mil)



Shortnose sturgeon with a radio tag attached.

Weed Management –NAS Fallon, Nevada

Naval Air Station (NAS) Fallon, Nevada is located in northern Nevada about 65 miles east of Reno and manages 240,000. NAS Fallon operates a 14,000 foot runway, four training ranges, an electronic warfare range, and associated special use airspace within the Fallon Range Training Complex.

Recently we began an invasive weed control program on the Navy lands in Churchill County Nevada. Weeds such as Russian knapweed (*Centaurea repens*), saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*), and yellow starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) have been spreading onto the Navy's rangelands. Russian knapweed is a deep rooted, perennial weed threatening Nevada's crop and rangelands. It thrives on rangeland and irrigated ground. Russian knapweed invaded cropland on Navy agricultural leases that were abandoned during the drought of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Russian knapweed prefers sites that have higher precipitation such as drainages, irrigated fields, and runoff areas. Once established Russian knapweed is extremely drought tolerant. Cattle and sheep will graze the knapweed in the spring when it is young and tender. When overgrazing occurs, desirable plants become stressed, which gives Russian knapweed a competitive advantage.

No single control method will result in satisfactory control of Russian knapweed. We collected weed management information from the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. A contractor was hired to apply an appropriate herbicide, Clopyralid (Transline) to begin the control program on 100 acres of Navy lands. The most effective time to apply the herbicide to the knapweed is during the bloom stage of the plant or later. The herbicide application controlled about 95% of the Russian knapweed. In the contract we also required that the area be revegetated. Long term control of Russian knapweed can be obtained through vigorous competition



from perennial plants. Without competition, Russian knapweed quickly reinvades.

There are many varieties of grasses that can be used in Nevada to successfully compete with Russian knapweed. In the weed control contract we required plants such as crested wheatgrass, thick spike wheatgrass, fourwing saltbush, and basin wild rye be planted on the areas where the knapweed was controlled with the herbicide. The precipitation a site receives is the single most important factor in choosing a plant for revegetation. You also must consider the intended use of the area, availability and price of the seed, soil type, and ease of establishment.

This year we also removed about 150 saltcedar shrubs in our weed control program. Saltcedar are invasive, introduced shrubs that are rapidly spreading to riparian areas in Nevada. The saltcedar is spread along the irrigation system that flows through NAS Fallon. The Irrigation District uses Arsenal and Rodeo. To control the saltcedar we hired a contractor that cut the shrubs down and applied a herbicide to the stump. Garlon (*Trichlopyr ester*) is the most effective herbicide available for the cut stump treatment.

Yellow starthistle infests cultivated fields, pastures, and waste lands in the west. Last spring we found yellow starthistle growing on two of our agricultural lease parcels. Its roots grow faster and deeper than those of many native forage plants and shrubs. There were only two small patches growing (20 plants); those were removed by hand. On larger infested areas there are herbicides such as Transline that will control yellow starthistle. We will continue monitoring the lands in the spring and see if the starthistle has returned. Next year we will also monitor the knapweed and saltcedar control areas and use herbicides for any spot re-treatment that is required to control the invasive weeds.

Gary Cottle (Cottle.Gary@Fallon.Navy.Mil)

FORT STEWART NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGERS RECEIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Original Story by Sally Atkins
Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Branch

For 38 years, the Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF) has bestowed Annual Conservation Achievement Awards upon individuals and organizations that contribute significantly to natural resource conservation at the local, state, and national levels. In recognition of the remarkable conservation work performed at Fort Stewart, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division nominated three Directorate of Public Works' (DPW) Environmental Natural Resource personnel for the GWF's 2000 Conservationists of the Year award.

Award winners were honored at a ceremony in Atlanta in April and were presented with sculptures of various wildlife species. Mr. Tommy Hilliard (Chief of Forestry Branch), Linton Swindell (Chief, Fish & Wildlife Branch), and Tim Beaty, (Endangered Species Biologist) received the prestigious award for their work to restore and protect the unique longleaf pine-wiregrass ecosystem and to increase the population of the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker (RCW).

More recently, Mr. Hilliard, Mr. Swindell, and Mr. Beaty were recognized at the Fort Stewart quarterly Environmental Quality Control Committee, which is chaired by the Garrison Commander. COL Poltorak noted that the protection of the natural resources entrusted to the U.S. Army's care benefits everyone and enables our soldiers to continue uninterrupted training throughout the year and for years to come.

Together with their staffs, these Fort Stewart managers have significantly improved the longleaf-wiregrass community and endangered species management at Fort Stewart. Their cooperative efforts have resulted in an increase in the number of RCW nests on Fort Stewart by 17% in 1999, as well as consistently striving to accomplish an annual prescribed fire goal of approximately 100,000 acres of pine forest.

According to Mr. Swindell, these significant management results have been achieved by initiating proactive, state-of-the-art wildlife management techniques, such as the construction of artificial nest cavities and translocation of individual birds to encourage new breeding pairs. Re-establishing wiregrass, a critical ground cover, was another innovative development that was utilized to restore RCW habitat. Fire, the key ingredient in keeping life balanced in the longleaf pine ecosystem, needs to be periodic in order to perpetuate this type of ecosystem.

In recognition of the success achieved by the ecosystem management at Fort Stewart and at other installations, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service agreed in 1997 to reduce training restrictions around RCW habitat on Army lands. This helps to minimize the burden placed on training soldiers, while still maintaining and growing a healthy RCW population. Through further management and studies, the ultimate goal is to recover the RCW population, removing it from the endangered species list, and to eliminate training restrictions.





"Managed" Cat Colonies in Parks

Harmful to Birds and Other Wildlife

The non-profit conservation group, American Bird Conservancy (ABC), has long opposed so-called "managed" colonies of stray and feral cats, claiming that such colonies cannot be effectively controlled and that these cats, no matter how well fed, are still responsible for the deaths of thousands of native songbirds and other animals. Now, a new scientific study backs up ABC's claim that the efforts of stray cat feeders are misguided and damaging to wildlife.

The study by Dan Castillo at the Department of Environmental Studies at Florida International University, contradicts widely-held beliefs by cat colony proponents that well-fed cats do not kill wildlife, that cats are territorial and will prevent more cats from joining the colony, and that cat colonies decline in size over time.

Two cat colonies in Miami-Dade County parks were observed for 13 months and, contrary to previous assumptions, it was found that almost every month new cats joined the colonies while other cats disappeared. The colonies acted as dumping grounds for people abandoning cats, despite state and county laws making this illegal. Despite attempts by volunteers to have the cats spayed or neutered, intact cats were observed, as were pregnant cats and newborn kittens.

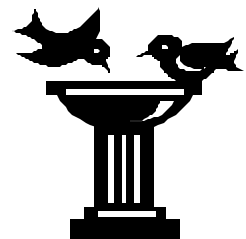
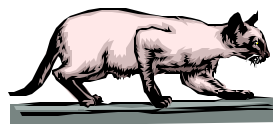
Although well-fed, cats at both locations were observed chasing, stalking and killing birds and other animals. Aggressive interactions among the cats were few and did not limit cat access to food or the colonies. Cat feeders placed large amounts of food throughout the parks which then attracted other animals such as raccoons, fox, skunks and stray dogs.

According to Mr. Castillo, "Managed cat colonies are not the solution to cat overpopulation problems. My findings demonstrate that the establishment of cat colonies on public lands encourages cat abandonment and is harmful to native wildlife. Cat colonies do not decline over time - they just perpetuate themselves."

Linda Winter, director of Cats Indoors! for ABC stated, "Mr. Castillo's study confirms what other studies have shown - that cat colonies cannot be managed and do not belong in parks. Solutions to the stray cat overpopulation problem must also protect birds and other wildlife."

ABC's Cats Indoors! Campaign is supported by thousands of individuals and organizations in the conservation, animal welfare, wildlife rehabilitation, and veterinary communities. For more information, visit ABC's Web site at: www.abcbirds.org

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