



NATIONAL FRIENDS CONFERENCE A WINNER

BY MOLLY KRIVAL

The First National Friends Conference, held February 22-25 in Washington, D.C., was a walloping success.

Planned and underwritten through a partnership between the National Wildlife Refuge Association — with financial support from non-government organizations (see sponsors pg. 9) — and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), this inaugural event attracted 270 people from 102 refuges in 43 states.



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Left to right: Lou Hinds (USFWS), Kathy Woodward (Friends of Great Swamp NWR), George Hoffmann (Friends of Midway Atoll), Evan Hirsche (NWRA)

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FRIENDS TAKE REFUGE FUNDING MESSAGE TO CAPITOL HILL

On Monday, February 25th, following the first National Refuge Friends Conference, 130 Friends representatives from across the country converged on Capitol Hill to meet with their members of Congress and staff about the Refuge System funding crisis. Sponsored and organized by the NWRA, this first-ever event bolstered the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement's (CARE) efforts to generate support among legislators for a major refuge funding increase in fiscal year 2003.

In preparation for their visits,

Friends representatives received training from members of the CARE group on how to successful-

ly promote their refuge funding needs to their lawmakers.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

MAKING THE WILDLIFE REFUGE CONNECTION...WITH PEOPLE

An estimated 30,000 to 40,000 people belong to the 220 locally cultivated refuge support groups across the country. While a good number are tourists from around the world who have stopped by such well-known refuges as Ding Darling NWR, FL, or Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR, CA, the vast majority are local citizens who, recognizing the important role these unique lands and waters play in the conservation of habitat and species, have chosen to make a personal commitment of time or money — or both — to making these places stronger for the future.

Why is this important? Because, as we approach the Refuge System's centennial in 2003, the challenges refuges faced over the past 100 years pale in comparison to what we can expect in the next century. Refuges will grapple with unprecedented human population pressures, invasive exotic species and water shortages. It's vital that we take stock of and work to enhance the local citizen support that will tackle such challenges.

Consider that by 2100, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that America's population will more than double to 571 million. That number translates into approximately 111 million additional housing units, nearly 200 million additional cars, and all the food, fresh water, infrastructure, utilities and durable goods necessary to support all those people over the next 97 years. In the next 20 years alone, we can expect our



MARIA CECIL

population to grow by more than 50 million.

If we're going to be confident in our ability to ensure healthy and diverse habitats throughout the country in the coming years, we must have a solid base of local citizens who are willing to speak out for the needs of our national wildlife refuges and who will actively enlist communities in their protection. While land acquisition for refuges remains an important conservation strategy, we will never have the capacity to buy all the habitat necessary to sustain a diverse array of species in our country.

Increasingly Friends groups will need to work with landowners adjacent to refuges to carve out conservation strategies consistent with their refuges' objectives. Indeed, volunteering on behalf of refuges will need to go beyond the construction of boardwalks and providing of interpretive services for visitors. Refuge volunteers will need to become envoys to private landowners and decision-

makers in their communities, working hand-in-hand with refuge professionals.

An important first step was the first annual National Refuge Friends Conference in Washington, DC, that convened hundreds of refuge Friends from around the country (see National Friends Conference a Winner, pg 1). This event began forging disparate Friends and volunteer groups into a cohesive national corps of citizens equipped with the tools to make their refuges and the broader Refuge System stronger in the future.

Following the conference, their cumulative voice was heard loud and clear when more than 130 Friends visited their members of Congress and staff to discuss the Refuge System funding crisis and needs of their local refuges.

By speaking with a unified voice, Friends groups can strengthen both their local refuges and the Refuge System. Indeed, the NWRA believes that Friends groups and volunteers at refuges hold the key to the future well-being of the entire Refuge System. That's why we're encouraging members of Friends groups to become members of the NWRA. By speaking with one voice at the national level for the thousands of refuge staff and volunteers who make a difference for refuges locally, we can — and will — move mountains for the Refuge System.

Evan Hirsche
President, NWRA



NATIONAL FRIENDS CONFERENCE A WINNER

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But numbers tell only part of the story. The purpose was to introduce Friends to each other and to those who work inside the Beltway who impact our refuges, and to hone our skills for refuge support. Even before the first plenary session, networking was in full swing. I met Friends I hadn't seen in years or only knew by e-mail. People got acquainted and began to appreciate the variety of refuges and the similarities among Friends groups.

The first plenary session began with a video of refuge wildlife and untamed landscapes that drew "ooh's" and "ah's", reminding us vividly of the places that center our passion. This was followed by

*We walked in as a
Friend of Our Refuge
and walked out as
Friends of the
National Wildlife
Refuge System.*

a videotaped welcome from Secretary of the Interior, Gale Norton, who praised the work of Friends groups on behalf of their local refuges. Plenary speakers included VIP's who told us how important Friends are to the Service, to the Cooperative

Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), and to the newly appointed Centennial Commission. (See below list of speakers). We were pleased that the Deputy Director of the Service, Marshall Jones, and the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System, Dan Ashe, considered us an important audience. Evan Hirsche, President of NWRA, then spoke about the need to create a national constituency of support around refuges.

By noon, we had a new sense of our value to and a strong appreciation for the National Wildlife Refuge System as a whole. Both Hirsche and the other speakers stressed the importance of

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CONFERENCE PLENARY SPEAKERS

Keynote Speaker: Representative Curt Weldon
(R-PA)

Dan Ashe, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
John Berry, Executive Director, National Fish and
Wildlife Foundation

"Buff" Bohlen, Chairman, NWRA

Bob Byrne, Wildlife Program Coordinator, Wildlife
Management Institute

Lynn Greenwalt, Member, Centennial Commission

Evan Hirsche, President, NWRA

William Horn, Chairman, Centennial Commission

Marshall Jones, Deputy Director, USFWS

Craig Manson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for
Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Noah Matson, Refuge Program Manager/Science
Policy Analyst, Defenders of Wildlife

Neal Sigmon, Treasurer, NWRA

Kathy Woodward, President, Friends of Great
Swamp NWR

Co-Emcee's: **Louis Hinds**, Florida Refuges Supervisor
(USFWS) and **George Hoffmann**, President,
Friends of Midway Atoll NWR



Friends network in the exhibit area at the National Friends Conference.



ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION THREATENS BORDER REFUGES —MANAGER CALLS SITUATION ‘OUT OF CONTROL’

By LAWRENCE S. SMITH, SOUTHWEST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Refuges in the Southwest region along the Mexican border are contending with serious threats as a result of illegal immigration activity. In Texas the Santa Ana, Lower Rio Grande Valley, and Laguna Atascosa Refuges share 81 miles of border with Mexico. In Arizona, Cabeza Prieta Refuge shares 56 miles, Buenos Aires, 12 miles, and San Bernardino, 6 miles. The Border Patrol is paying increased attention to urban crossing areas, so these remote and isolated federal lands have become major arteries for smuggling humans and drugs into the United States.

Ensuring the safety of refuge staff and visitors is the most serious problem caused by this traffic. The Texas border refuges have always attracted many domestic and international tourists during the winter, but recently Santa Ana Refuge visitors have been robbed and threatened with physical harm. Safety concerns forced the refuge to cancel nighttime tram trips—the only opportunity for wildlife-watchers to see elusive nocturnal mammals.

Last year 14 foreign citizens seeking illegal entry to the U.S. died when they were abandoned on the Cabeza Prieta Refuge by their “Coyote” (paid smuggler guide) miles from any water or assistance. That tragedy made the

national news, but every year at least a few people are killed while involved in illegal activities on the refuges.

Government buildings and staff residences have been broken into, and visitors’ property stolen. At San Bernardino Refuge a vehicle and all the tools in the refuge shop were taken. At Buenos Aires, all of the staff residences have



Buenos Aires NWR, Arizona

been burglarized—some several times. Most wildfires on these refuges result from human activity.

Habitat degradation is occurring on a vast scale due to the hundreds of illegal trails and roads that now criss-cross once-pristine refuge landscapes. They are littered with tons of trash and high concentrations of human waste. It took an enormous effort to remove thirty-seven abandoned vehicles from Cabeza Prieta Refuge during the past year and a half. In one mass immigration, 60 vehicles from Mexico entered Buenos Aires Refuge at one time!

The concern about habitat destruction and disturbance of

wildlife is heightened by the fact that these refuges provide homes for several unique species. Texas refuges protect habitat for the endangered ocelot and jaguarundi. The only U. S. population of the endangered Sonoran pronghorn is found on the Cabeza Prieta, and the endangered cactus ferruginous pygmy owl and the lesser long-nosed bat are found

both on Cabeza Prieta and Buenos Aires Refuges. Wilderness values are compromised at Cabeza Prieta by both illegal traffic and the law enforcement activities of the Border Patrol.

A much larger law enforcement presence will be required to slow or halt the movement of undocumented aliens

across federal lands. The House Committee on Appropriations is requiring that all federal agencies involved with the Mexican border develop coordinated plans to mitigate and prevent environmental and other impacts caused by this illegal immigration from the south. Still in the draft stage, the plans estimate the additional funding needed for an increase in law enforcement personnel. Even if the illegal traffic were to be stopped today, a tremendous amount of habitat rehabilitation will be required on these refuges. But for now, in the words of one refuge manager, “The situation remains out of control.”

EVAN HIRSCHKE



FUTURE UNCERTAIN FOR BANKS LAKE REFUGE

By PHILLIP MORGAN, SOUTHEAST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

In 1985, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service established Banks Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), in south-central Georgia, after purchasing a tract of land from The Nature Conservancy. Operated as a satellite of Okefenokee NWR, Banks Lake includes about 1,000 acres of open water and 3,000 acres of freshwater marsh, hardwood swamp and upland habitat. Today, the future of the refuge is uncertain.

Because Banks Lake NWR has never had an operational budget or staff, employees from the Okefenokee NWR must travel 150 miles roundtrip to do basic management and maintenance. A testament to the refuge's natural beauty, each year twenty thousand visitors use the refuge mainly for freshwater fishing, wildlife observation and photography. Refuge facilities include a boat launch ramp, two fishing piers that accommodate disabled anglers, a short hiking trail and a concession building with public restrooms. Public demand for these facilities is increasing, but without staff on site the demands cannot be met.

A greater challenge stems from unregulated development adjacent to the refuge. The Nature Conservancy purchased Banks Lake without a property line survey, and the refuge boundary was not established until a court ruling in May 2000. The ruling established the refuge boundary at the historic 1925 water line, several feet below the normal high water level. Since the early 1980s, landowners across the north shore of the lake have built docks, boat ramps and sec-

ond homes on sub-divided lots at and below the normal high water level of the lake. The lake was drawn down for management purposes in October 2001, but before it can be returned to full pool, flowage easements (granting the "right" for occasional flooding of their land) must be obtained from over 50 private landowners. So far, none of the landowners has provided the required easement.

To further complicate matters, the draw down of the lake exposed what appear to be numerous illegal septic systems. County officials were advised and given photographic evidence of these violations, but no action has been taken to date.

A disconcerting result of these obvious conflicts between the refuge and its adjacent landowners is a bill introduced in Congress by Representative Saxby Chambliss (R-GA). The bill (H.R. 987) would (1) transfer management responsibility for Banks Lake NWR to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, (2) cost the federal government \$75,000-\$100,000 per year for the next five years, and (3) exempt these actions from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 or any other federal laws relating to federal action.

Banks Lake NWR needs staff and community support. Without them, the habitats, wildlife and visitor opportunities remain at risk.

FRIENDS TAKE REFUGE FUNDING MESSAGE TO CAPITOL HILL—Continued from page 1



EVAN HIRSCHKE

Friends gather on U.S. Capitol steps before meeting with lawmakers

In meeting with their lawmakers, Friends asked them to support a \$100-million increase for fiscal year 03, the start of a four-year plan to reach an annual Refuge System budget of \$700 million.

Overwhelmingly, refuge volunteers reported being warmly received by their Congressional offices. As follow-up to their meetings, many Friends have invited their members of Congress and staff to their refuges, providing an additional opportunity to build long-term support.



FRIENDS CORNER

LOCAL CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE: FRIENDS OF SEAL BEACH

BY BEVERLY HEINZE-LACEY

By the time you read this article, the National Wildlife Refuge System's 100th birthday will be less than a year away (March 14, 2003)! Many Friends groups are planning events and the excitement is building, for how many of us ever live to celebrate a Centennial event?

Apropos to the significance of the Centennial, Friends of Seal Beach NWR in California are planning a birthday splash that is sure to put the National Wildlife Refuge System on the public's "map," and not just at their own refuge, but within the region and across the nation. Seal Beach NWR is a migration stopover point, so the Friends decided to feature migration — not only at the refuge, but throughout the region with a focus on birds, fish and marine mammals as well. Their program is a yearlong expedition, traveling the spring and fall migratory routes in Region 1, from the Mexican border to Washington.

The group will "migrate" in style — in a fleet of seven Prius vans donated by Toyota (Prius is a hybrid vehicle with an electric/internal combustion engine). The vans are to be equipped with camping, scuba, and video equipment, and each will pull a boat on a trailer. A communications van will have a website for distance learning so students can keep track of the expedition. The display vehicle will tell the refuge story in high

*Friends of Seal Beach
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public use areas such as airports and shopping malls. The fleet will also transport students to area refuges. This ambitious program will include the following important elements:

- Using media events at major cities to publicize the refuge story.
- Making video records of visits to remote refuges that will be distributed at a news conference during the next city stopover. About 12 news conferences are planned; videos will feature salmon migration, bird use on refuges, etc.
- Studying migrating fish, birds, and marine mammals to better understand gaps between refuges and determine what lands and waters need to be protected for the next century.
- Taking students on field trips to refuges, with a primary focus on inner-city children who have had little exposure to refuges.

The key to the group's success is their history of "friend-raising."

They have a three-year relationship with Toyota that started when the corporation sent 300 employees to plant native trees at the refuge. Both will benefit — the Friends use the vans, and Toyota benefits from the publicity. Toyota will showcase the van in places not otherwise possible, and get data and video footage on vehicle performance in various settings.

The group is seeking donations from other corporations for camping gear, gasoline, bottled water and other supplies, and partnering with other nonprofits such as the National Wildlife Refuge Association, Ducks Unlimited, zoos, aquariums, and Scouts.

Together they hope to meet the three primary purposes for their event:

- Celebrate the National Wildlife System's 100-year history and inform people about it;
- Show the importance of having a system of refuges for the survival of migratory animals;
- Show that people are critical to the System, as volunteers and advocates, and what they can do to help.

Friends of Seal Beach NWR have created a visionary plan that both "Celebrates a Century of Conservation" and works to ensure a healthy future for our National Wildlife Refuge System. We wish great success to Friends of Seal Beach NWR and to all of you as you prepare to celebrate the Centennial!



FRIENDS CORNER

REGIONAL CENTENNIAL EVENTS PLANNED

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in anticipation of the 2003 Refuge System Centennial, is planning a series of events at refuges across the country. For information on how you can participate, please contact the Centennial Coordination Team member in your region (see below).

FOCUS REFUGES

The Service has designated several "focus" refuges in each region where it will concentrate its Centennial activities during 2002 and 2003. The effort is intended to attract media and public attention to the System. Major special events will take place at these refuges providing an opportunity for Friends partnerships and involvement.

	2002	2003
Pacific	Stillwater NWR, NV Stone Lakes NWR, CA Ridgefield NWR, WA	Tualatin River NWR, OR Don Edwards San Francisco Bay NWR, CA Hanford Reach, WA Saddle Mountain NWR & Mid-Columbia NWRC, WA Sacramento NWR, CA
Southwest	Las Vegas NWR, NM Tishomingo NWR, OK Aransas NWR, TX	Buenos Aires NWR, AZ Santa Ana NWR, TX Wichita Mountains NWR, OK
Great Lakes–Big Rivers	Ottawa NWR, OH Seney NWR, MI Horicon NWR, WI	Upper Mississippi River NFWR, IA, IL, MN, WI Mark Twain NWRC, IL DeSoto, Squaw Creek NWRs, IA, MO
Southeast	Reelfoot NWR, TN Okefenokee NWR, GA Noxubee NWR, MS	White River NWR, AR Alligator, Pea Island NWRs, NC Pelican NWR, FL
Northeast	Montezuma NWR, NY Eastern MA NWR, MA Patuxent Research Refuge, MD	Chincoteague NWR, MD Parker River NWR, MA John Heinz at Tinicum NWR, PA
Mountain–Prairie	Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR, CO Rainwater Basin WMD, NE Monte Vista NWR, CO	Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, UT National Bison Range, MT National Elk Refuge, WY
Alaska	Tetlin NWR Alaska Maritime NWR	All Alaska Refuges

NEED INFORMATION?

The Service has designated a Centennial coordination team and each region has staff dedicated to the event. Contact these people for information and discuss how your group can get involved:

Refuge Centennial

Coordinator	.....Dennis Prichard.....	703-358-2388
Pacific	.....Susan Saul.....	503-872-2728
Southwest	.....Julie Niemann	505-248-6635
Great Lakes–Big Rivers	.....Chuck Traxler*	612-713-5313
Southeast	.....Kyla Hastie	404-679-7133
Northeast	.....Kathy Zeamer*	413-253-8527
Mountain–Prairie	.....Sheri Featherman	303-236-8145 x649
Alaska	.....Cathy Rezabeck.....	907-786-3351

**New staff are being assigned to these positions.*



CARE MEDIA BLITZ PAYS OFF

BY GRETCHEN MULLER

In November and December 2001, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE) conducted a series of media events to spotlight the Refuge System funding crisis. The NWRA-led media effort centered around a report entitled *Shortchanging America's Wildlife*, which illustrates the Refuge System's \$2 billion funding crisis

by highlighting challenges at 12 refuges around the country. CARE released the report at a Washington, DC press conference attended by a tri-partisan assemblage of key members of Congress. Two additional press events were held at J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR in Florida and at the San Diego Refuge Complex in California. All three events generated extensive

media coverage in local and national radio, print and television outlets. The report also helped Friends groups highlight their local refuge funding needs and provided a vehicle to attract support from their members of Congress.

In February, President Bush announced his proposed budget figures for fiscal year 2003, the

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SHORTCHANGING AMERICA'S WILDLIFE MEDIA COVERAGE

Print Media

November 15, 2001: *Associated Press State & Local Wire*: Group seeks budget rise for refuges

November 16, 2001: *The Charleston Gazette*: Wildlife refuges need funds, conservation groups assert

November 16, 2001: *Deseret News*: Woes at Bear River bird site used as example

November 16, 2001: *The Commercial Appeal*: Conservation alliance calls for more money for nature refuges

November 19, 2001: *Greenwire*: Refuges: Even with nearly doubled budget, more money needed, enviros say

November 27, 2001: *Denver Post*: Refuge crunch

December 4, 2001: *St. Alban's Messenger*: Friends of refuge protest lack of Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge funding

December 13, 2001: *Roswell Daily Record*: Lack of funding propelling Bitter Lake into crisis

December 18, 2001: *Bonita/Naples Daily News*: 'Ding' Darling wildlife refuge supporters hoping to get federal funding help

December 18, 2001: *San Diego Union-Tribune*: At-odds groups join forces; CARE's goal is to increase

budget for U.S. refuge system

December 19, 2001: *Ft. Myers News-Press*: 'Ding' Darling, other refuges seek funding

December 19, 2001: *Ft. Myers-News Press*: Editorial: Area wildlife refuge faces tough times

December 20, 2001: *Island Reporter*: 'Ding' faces funding crisis

December 31, 2001: *Associated Press State & Local Wire*: Sponsors worry refuge won't get funding

December 31, 2001: *Tampa Tribune*: Wildlife sanctuaries suffering shortfalls

January 1, 2002: *Miami Herald*: (AP) Sponsors worry refuge won't get funding

January 2002: *The Sherwood Gazette*: Funding crisis at Tualatin Wildlife Refuge

Electronic Media

San Diego:

KFMB (CBS)

KGTV (ABC)

KNSD (NBC)

KPBS (Public TV & Radio)

KUSI (UPN)

Univision

Florida:

WBBH-TV (NBC)

WFTX-TV (FOX)

WGCU-TV

WINK-TV (CBS)

WZVN-TV (ABC)

NPR



CARE MEDIA BLITZ PAYS OFF

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Refuge System's centennial year. Included in the President's proposal is a \$56.5-million increase in operations and maintenance funding for refuges, which represents an 18 percent increase over the fiscal year 2002 enacted budget, and marks the largest-ever fund-

ing increase for refuges.

While a strong request from the Administration, the CARE group supports a \$100 million increase for FY03 as a first step toward reaching an ultimate goal of \$700 million annually. Working with local refuge Friends groups,

CARE is pursuing a four-year strategy, ending in FY06, to achieve this goal. As part of that effort, CARE will conduct more regional media events in the coming year and welcomes inquiries from refuge Friends who may be interested in hosting one.

NATIONAL FRIENDS CONFERENCE A WINNER

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becoming a member of NWRA, and gave the Friends a new understanding of how this Association supports the Refuge System. More than 80 people joined the Association then and there!

In the afternoon and well into the second day, we attended workshops devoted to the Centennial, Fundraising, Media and Events, and Community Education and Outreach. The experienced speakers suggested a wide variety of ways we could reach our goals.

THE REFUGE AWARD CEREMONY: AN EMOTIONAL HIGH

The most powerful moments of the conference were at an evening reception announcing the Volunteer of the Year and the Friends Group of the Year, awards sponsored each year by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. This year's winners were Melissa Owen from Buenos Aires Refuge, AZ, and the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society,

NC, respectively.
WHAT'S NEXT?

The NWRA staff and board are already planning next year's Friends Conference, scheduled for the weekend of February 1, 2003. Be sure to attend. The newly hatched Friends Movement of a decade ago is now stretching its fledgling wings getting ready to fly. So, also, is the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Be there as we soar!

Molly Krival, former President of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, is a



NESHAN H. NALCHAVAN ©

Dan Ashe and Evan Hirsche present a refuge friend award to keynote speaker, Rep. Curt Weldon (R-PA)

2002 CONFERENCE SPONSORS

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Defenders of Wildlife
National Rifle Association

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The Wilderness Society
Trust for Public Land
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute



REFUGE VOLUNTEERS LAUDED AT NATIONAL CEREMONY

BY GRETCHEN MULLER

At a reception held during the 2002 National Refuge Friends Conference in Washington, D.C., the Friends Group and Volunteer of the Year were honored for their volunteering spirit, dedication to the Refuge System and exceptional contributions to wildlife conservation. Judge Craig Manson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, commended the honorees in a ceremony sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Melissa Owen, Volunteer of the Year, made a moving and heart-felt speech to the 300-plus crowd of volunteers, federal agency staff and representatives from national conservation and recreation organizations. The Tucson, Arizona resident said there are two reasons why she donates thousands of hours to the refuge: Wildlife and People. She shared

pictures and stories of her experience as a volunteer, and called upon every person on the audience to volunteer "two more hours each month." Melissa has donated more than 6,000 hours to Buenos Aires NWR over the last six years. She initiated landscape projects that created a native grass garden and a butterfly garden on the refuge. She helps greet visitors on weekends when the refuge visitor center is closed, and continues to build the refuge's basic recycling efforts into a comprehensive "greening program." In addition, Melissa coordinates the cadre of volunteers and works with the Friends of Buenos Aires NWR.

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, the refuge support group for Alligator River and Pea Island NWRs in North Carolina, was singled out as the Friends Group of the Year. President Tom White accepted the award on behalf of the group. The Society provides volunteer support to the refuges

and has contributed more than \$500,000 worth of goods and services that will go toward building a visitor center, overlooks and wildlife viewing towers. The Society has been instrumental in purchasing equipment and publications for the refuges and funding its volunteer programs. It also runs a profitable gift shop in the Pea Island Refuge Visitor Center, selling more than \$160,000 annually in books and other educational materials.

The National Wildlife Refuge Association extends its sincere congratulations to the 2002 Refuge System Award recipients, whose generous spirits embody the meaning of refuge volunteerism. The efforts of the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society and Melissa Owen demonstrate courage and passion in the pursuit of conservation, and they are to be commended for their commitment.



MARTY LAVOR ©

L to R: George Hoffmann, Buff Bohlen, Melissa Owen, Assistant Secretary Manson, Marshall Jones, Tom White, John Berry
Photos for awards were kindly donated by Bill Page and Michael Halminski.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

REFUGE SUPPORT GROUP MINI-GRANTS

Working with our partners the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Audubon Society, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NWRA awards Friends groups grants of up to \$5,000 for start-up, capacity-building, and project-specific initiatives. There are two grant cycles each year, with deadlines of March 30 and August 31. For grant application materials, visit www.nfwf.org/programs/nwrgp.htm, or contact Trevor Needham at NFWF, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036, or call (202) 857-0166.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE REFUGE REPORTER

The *Refuge Reporter* is published quarterly and is devoted exclusively to news and information about the National Wildlife Refuge System. Its purposes are to explain the role of the system and individual refuges and their management practices and proposals, to provide information for enhancing refuge visits, and to broaden a constituency that will act in support of this national resource. To subscribe, send your name and address along with \$12/one year or \$22/two years to: *Refuge Reporter*, Avocet Crossing, Millwood, VA 22646-0156. Please make checks payable to *Refuge Reporter*.

CENTENNIAL COMMISSION APPOINTED

In March, Interior Secretary Gale Norton announced her appointments for the 10-member National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial Commission during a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. The Centennial Commission will help the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leverage resources with public and private partners to promote the Refuge System on the eve of and during its 100th anniversary. A centerpiece of the Commission's activities will be planning and hosting a national conference in October 2003.

Centennial Commission Members

William P. Horn, Chair	Jack Hanna
Ramona Seeligson Bass	Karl Malone
Michael Bean	John L. Morris
Peter Coors	Kym Murphy
Lynn Greenwalt	Daniel A. Pedrotti

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 Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS)
 Senator John Breaux (D-LA)
 Representative John D. Dingell (D-MI)
 Representative Curt Weldon (R-PA)

Correction: Autumn 2001 *Flyer*. Dan Ashe's correct title is the Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



JOIN NWRA TODAY!

Membership benefits include a handy tote bag with the "Honk" logo, our quarterly newsletter, action alerts, an NWRA sticker, and discounts on events.

\$25 (basic membership) \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 _____ Other

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