Copper River Shorebird Festival – Cordova Ranger District, Alaska
Region: May 8-11, 2003

Hotels are sold out. It’s not fishing season. It’s the off-season for tourists in Alaska. But people are buying wildlife art and photography, field guides, posters, t-shirts, participating in a parade (in the rain), and a 24-hour “bird-a-thon” competition. What in the heck is going on? It’s Cordova Alaska’s Annual Copper River Shorebird Festival – that’s what’s going on. And it’s going on in a big way, especially for a town of 2,500 people that receives approximately 160 inches of rain per year. Yes, it is true. Millions of shorebirds coming from their wintering habitat in Mexico and stopping in Cordova, Alaska for a short stay before migrating to their summer habitat in North and Northwestern Alaska are cause for celebration, education, and cooperation within a community that is also discovering the economic benefits of a “wildlife based” festival. The festival has become a full-scale collaboration with the Forest Service taking on a major role in its planning, coordination, and environmental education activities. A year ago, the festival even included a live interactive web cast with over 500,000 students from the US, Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica. Click below on the link for the WFRP report that provides more details/photos on this particular project.

I had the pleasure of attending this year’s Shorebird Festival and got a first-hand look at why it is one of our premier NatureWatch achievements. From start to finish everything about the festival is first-rate. There were field trips for all ages, guest speakers, Birding 101 and 102 presentations, art walks, birding contests, children’s workshops and photo contest (held during the day and in the evening so parents could attend the guest speaker’s evening presentations), and even a parade down the main street that was lined with cheering children and adults. Carl Safina, author of New York Times bestseller list books “Song for a Blue Ocean,” and “Eye of the Albatross,” was one of the guest speakers. Safina’s writing has been compared to Aldo Leopold, and his talk was fascinating and provocative. Regional Forester Denny Bschor, Chugach National Forest Forest Supervisor Joe Meade, and Kristi Kantola, R10 Program Leader for Interpretive Services, Marketing and Tourism, flew in from Anchorage and Juneau to help support the event. They loved it. There was also a dinner cruise on an Alaskan Ferryboat that featured bird calling contests and on-deck bird watching. I estimated over 200 people on the cruise! Cordova District Ranger, Becky Nourse, summed it up well by saying “You could not ask any more from the community or from the Festival. This is the way it should be. Our local community partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Prince William Sound Science Center, and many others have made this festival the great success that it is today. We are thrilled to be a part of a community which celebrates the return of the true stars of the event, the shorebirds.”

Forest Service NatureWatch efforts like this are becoming more and more popular in towns and National Forests throughout the US. The formula for success is familiar – an idea, commitment, perseverance, a bit of seed money, some partners, support/recognition, lots of enthusiasm, organization, marketing, and having fun is all you need. If you are interested in
undertaking an event like this there are people and tools to help you get started on the right foot. A “Festival Planner Handbook” was developed by the folks who developed the Wenatchee River Salmon Festival and is an excellent piece of work that can be immensely helpful. *A copy is available on the “Don’s Toolbox CD-ROM” and is located in the “Environmental Education Toolbox, under “Projects,” and titled “Festival Planner.”

Pictures tell a thousand words so I will stop writing. If you ever get a chance to attend the Cordova Shorebird Festival, GO!

*Winging Northward – link to Forest Service Intranet WFRP reporting database*
http://wodata01/fsfiles/unit/wo/wfrp/usforest_2002.nsf/1a6c67f620ab968a88256af4007dbfe6/d0c7a17518e17fa085256c5b00605ef7?OpenDocument&Click=a6f97cf07f4fe14088256af7006c6537/$Body/0.2EC

- **Hot tip** – Most computers we use these days have tons of space on them. Try downloading (copy all and paste) the entire Don’s Toolbox CD on your hard drive. Then, you will always have it and you will not have to deal with “loading the CD” every time you want to use it. It makes accessing files, materials, logos, etc. a snap.

~Submitted by Don Virgovic, National NatureWatch Coordinator

**Vernal Pool Construction Guide Available**

Have you noticed how many frogs, toads and salamanders are found in a wetland that does not contain fish? Ephemeral wetlands, or vernal ponds, that do not contain fish provide critical habitat to wood frogs, spotted salamanders, fairy shrimp, and many other species. It is now possible to make a vernal pond that improves habitat for amphibians and reptiles. The USDA Forest Service, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and the Izaak Walton League of America are pleased to announce the publication of A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds. This easy to understand book contains techniques that the suburban homeowner, educator, public land steward, and private landowner may use to establish ephemeral wetlands.

To view on online version of the book, or to download an order form, please visit:
http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/boone/.
Forest Service Renews Agreement with Wildlife Habitat Council

The Wildlife Habitat Council and the USDA Forest Service [www.fs.fed.us/](http://www.fs.fed.us/) are pleased to announce the renewal of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which has been ongoing since 1998. The MOU outlines the important cooperative programs and efforts that the two organizations will continue to foster together.

The MOU also efficiently outlines opportunities and goals based on mutual shared interests. Potential areas for cooperation include:

- Enhance and restore wildlife habitat on private and corporate lands, and National Forest System lands, where linkages of mutual benefit are clearly demonstrated.
- Advance public awareness and appreciate of wildlife species, their habitats and the issue and challenges associated with conservation, preservation and management. Provide information on invasive species and on how to control this growing issue.
- Work with private industry to encourage their participation in this effort, including coordination efforts with local communities. Engage the Forest Service in WHC initiatives in urban/suburban brownfields restoration, and opportunities in the northwest Indiana area.
- Develop opportunities for partnering Forest Service programs, activities and facilities with WHC programs. Integrate our efforts through the Corporate Campaign for Migratory Bird Conservation and help focus efforts on critical habitat areas.
- Work on riparian improvements, focusing on reforestation. Engage the Forest Service on workshops in the Pittsburgh area in cooperation with the Three Rivers Habitat Partnership.
- Assist the Forest Service with public outreach and environmental education opportunities targeted toward an industry audience. The Forest Service accepted two speaking spots at the 2003 Anniversary Symposium.

In attendance with WHC staff, Bill Howard, President, and Bob Johnson, Executive Vice President, were the following Forest Service leadership: Dale Bosworth, Chief, Sally Collins, Associate Chief and Gail Kimbell, Associate Deputy Chief, National Forest System. Also present were: Larry Payne, Director, Cooperative Forestry Staff, and from the Watershed, Fish, Wildlife, Air and Rare Plants Staff were Jim Gladen, Director, Chris Iverson, Assistant Director, and Debbie Pressman, National Wildlife Program Leader.
Innovative Approaches to Wildlife/Highway Interactions Brings Interdisciplinary Energy to Highway

For many of us, that long ribbon of highway traversing our forests has been invisible. We vaguely recognize highways seriously impact wildlife, and those frequent road pizzas nag at our consciences. But what to do about it?

Finally, we’re realizing that we can take positive steps to reduce highway impacts to wildlife and fish. This spring, a series of seminars across the country brought together engineers and wildlife biologists from the Forest Service and several other land management, wildlife and transportation agencies to learn about the effects of highways on wildlife and the ways we can work together to make highways less impactive.

“I’ve never seen so many engineers and biologists in one room together…and enjoying it!” noted one engineer from the Siuslaw National Forest in Region 6. More important than the fun was the clear message that the challenges presented by highways—even those low-volume ones virtually all National Forests host—require the skills of both disciplines.

The WO’s San Dimas Technology and Development Center developed and funded the seminars through the Coordinated Federal Lands Highway Technology Implementation Program. The seminars drew heavily from the Wildlife Crossings Toolkit website developed by SDTDC.

Teams of engineers and biologists presented local and international case histories where wildlife issues were considered and solved, or were lessons painfully learned. Biologists learned the constraints faced by engineers in a highway project, while engineers learned ‘connectivity’ and ‘permeability across highways’ are biological as well as engineering terms.

Participants from over 4 dozen federal, state, and local agencies and Forest Service units networked through some tough challenges, including one positive collaborative effort on necessary bear research that had previously been stalled.

For more information on the seminar contents, see the Wildlife Crossings Toolkit (www.wildlifecrossings.info).

Dart Selected as New CEO of Elk Foundation

Contact: Steve Wagner, Communications Director, 800-CALL ELK, ext. 542, 406-523-4542; swagner@rmef.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—May 6, 2003

MISSOULA, Mont.–Peter J. Dart has been selected as the new president and CEO of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. After an extensive screening process, telephone interviews, written questions, presentations before staff and key volunteers, and multiple personal interviews, the conservation organization’s board of directors formally offered the position, and Dart accepted,
on Monday. The hiring brings to conclusion a four-month search that attracted a pool of more than 250 applicants.

Dart will report for work at the Elk Foundation on May 31. "We are very pleased to welcome (Peter) J. Dart and his family to the Elk Foundation," said Tom Baker, a Bowling Green, Ky., businessman who serves as the Elk Foundation's board chairman. "We are confident in his abilities to lead our great organization into a new era of ensuring the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat."

A reception for Dart is being planned for May 14, the Elk Foundation's 19th Anniversary, at the organization's headquarters in Missoula. Dart is an avid conservationist, hunter and outdoors enthusiast. He is a life member and longtime supporter of the Elk Foundation.

"I've watched the growth and mission successes of the Elk Foundation for many years, and I've been so impressed by its accomplishments. I welcome the opportunity to help lead this organization--its board, volunteers and staff--to new achievements in elk habitat conservation," said Dart, who lives in Tucson, Ariz. "And my family and I are thrilled to move to Missoula and get to know the community," he added.

Dart has been a recognized leader in the shooting sports and hunting industry for the past 17 years. His new position with the Elk Foundation ends his tenure as executive director of the Safari Club International and SCI Foundation, a position he held since 2001. While at Safari Club, he and his team repositioned that organization as a leader in protecting freedoms to hunt worldwide, established a charitable giving program that exceeded financial expectations, engaged corporate sponsors, achieved record income at the organization's annual convention in 2003, and balanced a budget deficit of $2.8 million.

From 1990 to 2001, he was president of Dart International Inc., a company that invented and produced interactive video target systems for use in various aspects of the shooting sports industry including hunter's education. Dart has served on the boards of the Archery Manufacturers and Merchants Association and the industry advisory board for the International Hunter Education Association. He currently serves on the board of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in Washington D.C.

"We've got a real winner in J. Dart, and I'm thrilled with his selection," said Bob Munson of Polson, one of the Elk Foundation's founders as well as its first CEO and still an honorary member of the board. "Our search process was exhaustive and J. rose to the top. I'm convinced that he brings the passion and leadership necessary to move us to a new level of mission accomplishment."

Working together in an ambitious campaign called "Pass It On," members, volunteers, and supporters of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation are conserving elk country at a pace exceeding 1½ square miles per day. Their organizational goal is to reach 5 million total acres--an area more than double the size of Yellowstone National Park--in 2005. Emphasizing permanent land protection and habitat stewardship, the Elk Foundation's state-of-the-art mapping technology focuses the work in crucial elk winter range, summer range, migration corridors and calving grounds. To help us "pass on" an elk country legacy for future generations, visit www.elkfoundation.org or call 800-CALL ELK.

Conservation Awards Presented at the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference

We are pleased to announce our selections for the Forest Service Lloyd Swift Sr. and Jack Adams Awards, and the joint Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Karl Urban
Celebrating Wildflowers, Conservation Partner and Conservation Project Awards. Chief Dale Bosworth and BLM Director Kathleen Clarke presented these awards on March 27, 2003, during the Forest Service/BLM Reception held in conjunction with the 2003 North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference.

The **Lloyd Swift Sr. Award** is presented periodically to a current or past Forest Service employee who exemplifies the characteristics, accomplishments and qualities of Lloyd W. Swift Sr., a wildlife biologist for the Forest Service (1928 – 1963). As part of his long and illustrious career, Lloyd served as the National Wildlife and Fisheries Director from 1944 through 1963. The award recognizes exceptional employees from Regional or Washington Office positions that have provided devotion and leadership in the management of fish, wildlife, and rare plants on national forests and grasslands, and a commitment to develop and work with internal and external partners. This year’s award was presented to **Paul Brouha**, National Director, Strategic Planning. Paul is recognized among his peers for providing natural resources vision and leadership at all levels of the Forest Service, and for his effectiveness at elevating the Forest Service fisheries program and increasing its capacity to deliver on-the-ground programs and projects.

The **Jack Adams Award** recognizes the Forest Service biologist or botanist that best reflects the unique and outstanding professional and personal qualities of Jack Adams, a Forest Service wildlife biologist who lost a battle with cancer in 1984 at the height of an acclaimed career. This award has been presented annually since 1985. This year’s Jack Adams Award was presented to **Greg Schenbeck**, a forest biologist on the Nebraska National Forest. Greg is recognized among his professional peers as an expert and advocate for progressive and innovative wildlife and plant management on the national grasslands of the Northern Great Plains.

The **Karl Urban Celebrating Wildflowers Award** is given jointly by the Forest Service and BLM to honor the memory of Karl Urban and acknowledges his contributions to the national Celebrating Wildflowers program. This award was presented in 1999 to Karl Urban – posthumously, for his outstanding wildflower drawings and ceaseless efforts to encourage and facilitate people to “Celebrate Wildflowers.” Individuals were nominated by the Forest Service and BLM for conservation of native flora of North America; creativity and commitment to the annual Celebrating Wildflowers program; involving communities and partners in Celebrating Wildflowers efforts; and for integrating educational elements through this program. This year’s Karl Urban award was presented to **Kimberly Pierson**, a forest botanist on the Sawtooth National Forest. Kimberly’s peers recognized her for developing and overseeing an incredibly
effective, well integrated and comprehensive botany program, and for her conservation education efforts.

The jointly sponsored Forest Service and BLM Conservation Partner Award recognizes an organization for outstanding leadership in the development and implementation of conservation programs and activities that directly benefit fish, wildlife and/or native plants on public lands. This year’s award was presented to the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee of Riverside, California, for their conservation accomplishments and cooperative efforts with the BLM and other partners to educate and inform the public and conserve the desert tortoise and its habitat within the Desert Tortoise Natural Area.

The jointly sponsored Conservation Project Award recognizes a project with outstanding conservation accomplishments for fish, wildlife and/or native plants and their habitats on public lands. This year’s award recipient was the Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Project for their efforts to protect, enhance and restore anadromous and resident fish habitat, and to achieve and maintain a balance between resource protection and resource use over the entire Upper Salmon River Basin. The Model Watershed Project has completed over 77 projects in the last nine years within an area that extends from the headwaters of the Stanley Basin to the mouth of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.

The collaboration, dedication, commitment, and accomplishments of these award recipients have contributed significantly to the conservation of native plant and animal communities on public lands. Their efforts exemplify the Forest Service commitment to our mission of sustaining healthy, diverse, and productive national forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Congratulations to the award recipients for a job well done!

Another 7,118 Acres Moved into Public Ownership as Elk Foundation Completes Watershed Project

Contact: Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Communications Director Steve Wagner at 800-CALL ELK, ext. 542, ormailto:swagner@rmef.org.

ANACONDA, Mont.—Mission accomplished! A complex, multi-partner, three-year project to permanently protect more than 32,000 acres of elk habitat has ended with a bold exclamation point. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation recently completed the final phase of its ongoing Watershed Project--the most ambitious land acquisition effort in organization history--by moving into public ownership another 7,118 acres along the Anaconda-Pintlar Range near Anaconda, Mont.

"This project wonderfully illustrates how the Elk Foundation loves to see conservation efforts unfold," said Jon Fossel, interim CEO of the Elk Foundation. "It involved a willing and generous landowner, many enthusiastic agency partners, a multitude of supporters including Montana’s Congressional delegation, the responsible use of renewable resources, and permanent protection of habitat for elk, other wildlife, and people who love wild country. Perfect!"

Watershed is a diverse landscape vaulting up from willow-choked bottomlands to alpine tundra, with pine-spruce-fir forests and rugged peaks. It is home to a wintering herd of more than 300 elk. Deer, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, wolverines, wolves, lynx, bears, fishers, martens and most other fauna of the Northern Rockies also inhabit the area. This landscape helps form the headwaters of the Clark Fork River. West slope cutthroat and bull trout swim in Watershed's clear streams and high mountain lakes.
Fossel said the area was prime real estate for development. Over time, condos and resorts likely would have spoiled its natural, wildlife and recreational values. Now those lands will remain open in perpetuity for public access, including hunting.


Veneman Thanks USDA Employees on the First Anniversary of Farm Bill Signing

Contact: Alisa Harrison (202) 720-4623

WASHINGTON, May 14, 2003--Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman marked the one year anniversary of the signing of the 2002 Farm Bill by thanking USDA employees nationwide for their hard work and dedication.

"USDA employees have worked tirelessly to implement the new provisions and to expedite providing benefits to producers and other program participants," said Veneman. "On behalf of the President, thank you for your dedication, persistence and professionalism throughout this process."

In a letter to all USDA employees, Veneman said that much as been accomplished since President Bush signed the bill into law May 13, 2002. Highlights include:

- Implemented all key commodity program provisions quickly and efficiently; provided more than $8 billion in program payments for agricultural producers;
- Released more than $1.8 billion for conservation assistance on working lands, including funding for Farm Bill and appropriated programs; implemented revisions to the Conservation Reserve Program with general sign-up in process between May 5 and May 30, 2003;
- Provided an additional $10 million for the Market Access Program and other additional funds for market-development activities;
- Implemented the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program, announcing $2 million in funding;
- Launched the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program; implemented a successful and popular pilot program to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in schools; provided access to Food Stamp Program benefits for newly qualified legal immigrants;
- Awarded hundreds of millions of dollars in Rural Development assistance, including value-added grants, and water and waste disposal funds; published final regulations and solicitation of applications for an anticipated $1.4 billion in rural broadband loans and loan guarantees;
- Implemented the Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvement Program and announced the availability of $23 million in grants; implemented the Biomass Research and Development Program and announced the availability of $21 million in grants;
- Held 11 sessions across the country and in Puerto Rico to reach out to the full spectrum of USDA customers; and Vernon Parker became the first USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

"These achievements are remarkable," said Veneman. "However, there is much work yet left to be done."
For example, Veneman said that USDA employees will now begin to implement several important provisions in the Conservation Title.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program EQIP, one of the most comprehensive programs in the 2002 Farm Bill, is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality and assists producers to meet local, state and federal regulations. EQIP funds help farmers and ranchers reduce soil erosion, improve water use efficiencies and protect grazing land by installing conservation practices that protect natural resources.

The EQIP Final Rule, which will be published soon in the Federal Register, makes the program even more farmer-friendly by simplifying procedures and greatly enhancing the locally led aspects of the program. Also, program eligibility is expanded, making more farmers and ranchers eligible for participation. In addition, the rule focuses the EQIP program on priority conservation issues, such as clean water and clean air.

The EQIP final rule revises the program to optimize environmental benefits and clarifies definitions and terms, especially definitions for individuals, persons and eligibility issues. With the final rule, farmers and ranchers now have access to financial and technical assistance to carry out EQIP measures.

Agricultural producers interested in participating in EQIP can apply at any time at their local NRCS office or USDA service center. NRCS will evaluate each application and give higher priority to those applications that use cost-effective conservation practices; treat multiple resource concerns; address national, state or local priorities; and provide the most environmental benefits. Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program Veneman also announced that $72 million in fiscal year 2003 funds are available to protect valuable agricultural land through the purchase of conservation easements under the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP), formerly called the Farmland Protection Program. FRPP is a voluntary program that helps eligible farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. Participating landowners agree not to convert their land to nonagricultural uses and to develop and implement a conservation plan for any highly erodible land. Landowners retain the right to use the property for agriculture.

The FRPP Final Rule, which will appear soon in the Federal Register, makes historic changes in program eligibility by welcoming participation of non-governmental organizations to compete for funding. Previous to this change, only applications from government sources could be considered. The change in the Final Rule makes the FRPP available nationwide.

Grassland Reserve Program Veneman also announced that $49.9 million in fiscal year 2003 funding is available to implement the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) in selected areas. The deployment of the Grassland Reserve represents an historic beginning of America’s conservation and protection of valuable grasslands. For the first time, USDA will focus funding resources and expertise on restoring, enhancing and protecting grasslands. The program will conserve vulnerable grasslands from conversion to cropland or development as well as conserve valuable grasslands by helping to maintain viable ranching operations.

Funds are being made available in a “Notice of Availability of Program Funds for the Grassland Reserve Program” scheduled for publication in the Federal Register in the next few days. All funds will be allocated to states by mid-July. A first sign-up for the new program will begin on June 16, 2003, in four target areas: · The Klamath River Basin in Oregon and California; · The watersheds of the Rio Grande River in New Mexico and Texas; · Drought affected areas in Colorado, eastern, Idaho, Montana, northern Utah and Wyoming; and · The lesser prairie-chicken habitat area in Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

In the areas targeted for the first sign-up, GRP will help keep acreage in grassland, enhance water quality, increase wildlife habitat for threatened and endangered and declining species, and help conserve native rangeland. Applications for participation will be accepted on a continuous basis at local USDA service centers.
Forest Land Enhancement Program The 2002 Farm Bill also established the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) to provide incentives to private landowners to become better managers and improve the health and productivity of their lands. The program is funded at $100 million over the life of the Farm Bill. The FLEP rule will be published in the Federal Register soon.

More than 300 million acres, or almost half of all forest in the nation, belong to nearly 10 million private owners. A majority of these landowners do not have the know-how and resources to manage their lands for long-term sustainability. Under FLEP, non-industrial private forest owners can receive technical, educational and financial assistance to help make their forests viable economic resources in their communities and provide for healthy watersheds, productive wetlands, diverse wildlife, clean air and opportunities for recreation.

Additional information on EQIP, FRPP, GRP and FLEP can be found at http://www.usda.gov/farmbill.

NWTF and the Natural Resources Conservation Service Partner to Promote Forest and Wildlife Resources

Contact: James Powell or Jonathan Harling, 803-637-3106.

Most people know that wildlife populations depend on good habitat for their livelihood. What those same people often don't know is that private land is of critical importance to wildlife across the country. Why? According to data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), nearly 50 percent of the U.S. (more than 900 million acres) is privately owned cropland, pastureland and rangeland managed by approximately 4.7 million individuals.

"The bottom line is that the future of half of the wildlife habitat in the U.S. is in the hands of only two percent of its citizens," said Dr. James Earl Kennamer, NWTF Senior Vice President for Conservation Programs. "We have to properly manage habitat where we find it, and, in many cases, that land is privately owned by corporations or individuals."

In an effort to help private landowners better manage their wildlife habitat, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has joined forces with the National Wild Turkey Federation's Wild Turkey Woodlands program to help provide more opportunities for landowners to learn about proper land management.

"Wildlife is a very important resource concern of the NRCS," said NRCS Chief Bruce Knight. "We help landowners meet specific habitat requirements for wildlife and we look forward to partnering with the NWTF in conserving more wild turkey habitat nationwide."

The NRCS has a track record of providing planning, technical and financial assistance for the conservation of natural resources on private lands. According to Kennamer, "There will be more practical, how-to-information available for people who want to manage their land for wildlife due to this new partnership with the NRCS."

It was only fitting for the NWTF's Wild Turkey Woodlands Program to partner with the NRCS, because the Wild Turkey Woodlands program is designed to assist and recognize individual and corporate landowners who actively manage for wild turkeys and other wildlife on their property. The Program also promotes hunting as an important part of wildlife management and our North American heritage.

"This is a major step in spreading the word about habitat improvement among private landowners," Kennamer said. "This partnership will allow the NWTF and the NRCS to
communicate more effectively with landowners on the importance of providing habitat for wildlife."

Recognizing the importance of wildlife management, both organizations will participate in meetings, landowner workshops and conferences to provide information and advice about managing wildlife. As part of the MOU agreement, both the NWTF and the NRCS will provide habitat management information in news articles, reports, newsletters and other outreach publications.

To learn more about the MOU agreement, call 1-800-THE-NWTF or log on to the National Wild Turkey Federation's web site at www.nwtf.org.


New Report Released on the Vital Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to North American Bird Life

One in three birds across North America owes its existence to Canada's boreal forest. New scientific evidence shows the fate of much of the continent's bird life depends on the future of this vast northern landscape - future that is now at a cross roads. The evidence is detailed in the report, The Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to Landbirds by biologist Peter Blancher of Bird Studies Canada. The study, based on an unprecedented compilation of bird census data from across Canada and the United States, was released on May 10th, International Migratory Bird Day.

Canada's boreal forest is the annual birthplace of as many as three billion of North America's warblers, thrushes, sparrows, hawks, woodpeckers and other land-living birds. It is also the largest intact forested ecosystem left in the world. The boreal, however, is under increasing pressure from development. Logging, agricultural conversion, oil and gas exploration and production, mining, and hydropower development are increasingly fragmenting the boreal. The U.S. can play a critical role in protecting the boreal.

U.S. consumers purchase much of the pulp and wood products, oil and gas, and hydropower produced from the boreal.

Canada's boreal forest offers an unparalleled opportunity to save one of Earth's most important wilderness treasures.

The Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to Landbirds was commissioned by the U.S.-based Boreal Songbird Initiative and the Canadian Boreal Initiative.

The Boreal Songbird Initiative (BSI) is a new project dedicated to educating birdwatchers and naturalists throughout the United States about the importance of the boreal forest to migratory birds and assisting efforts in Canada to conserve it. To obtain a copy of the report, or find out more information about the Boreal Forest and birds, go to www.borealbirds.org or www.borealcanada.ca.

Glen Contreras to Lead Team for the Forest Service Data Quality Act Program

Glen Contreras, Research WFWAR Staff, has been assigned to a three month detail as Team Leader for the Forest Service Data Quality Act program. He will be working in the Yates building with the Office of Regulatory and Management Services. The team will be working to develop a process for handling DQA petitions following the USDA Information Quality Guidelines and
assisting with petitions the agency has received. The phone number there is (202) 205-2938.
Glen can also be reached via email at gcontreras@fs.fed.us. For background information the
Forest Service website for the DQA program can be found at: http://www.fs.fed.us/qoi

Disabled Sportsmen Now Face Fewer Obstacles When Enjoying the Outdoors

Edgefield, S.C.—“Having an opportunity to get out and enjoy the outdoors is the toughest challenge facing a disabled person. My goal has always been to give people with any disability a chance to try fishing, hunting or any outdoor activity, and joining forces with the NWTF is the best way to accomplish that,” said Wheelin’ Sportsmen founder Kirk Thomas.

The NWTF is already well known for its education efforts and this expansion gives the organization the most comprehensive outreach program of any conservation organization. With more than 50 million disabled people in the U.S., the program will fill a much needed void.

“Through its JAKES program, the NWTF teaches youth 17 and under the importance and fun involved in conservation. Women are given the opportunity to experience the excitement of the outdoors in the NWTF’s Women in the Outdoors program, and now we’ve filled in another gap by reaching out to disabled individuals,” said NWTF CEO Rob Keck. “For several years, NTWF chapters have participated in special hunts for the disabled, and through the vision of local chapter leaders, the NWTF realized a huge opportunity to fill this need.”

Wheelin’ Sportsmen has primarily been a Southeastern U.S. organization, by joining with the NWTF, they will become an international organization and the outreach potential is unlimited. The Wheelin’ Sportsmen events will continue, but there will be more held and more people will be able to enjoy the outdoors and learn about conservation.

“This merger will allow Wheelin’ Sportsmen to reach more people than ever before. The NWTF’s chapter system and volunteer networks will offer disabled people the chance to enjoy the outdoors like never before,” said Wheelin’ Sportsmen founder Kirk Thomas. Visit the Wheelin’ Sportsmen website at wheelin-sportsmen.org for more information and details of upcoming events or call 800-THE-NWTF.
Vacancies

The following job announcements are just a sample of the job opportunities that can be found at [http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/)

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<td>Idyllwild, CA</td>
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</tbody>
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Hotlinks!

- Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plants: [http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/)
- FS Today Newsletter: [http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs_today/](http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/pao/fs_today/)
- Roadless Area Conservation: [http://roadless.fs.fed.us/](http://roadless.fs.fed.us/)
- Large-Scale Watershed Restoration Projects: [http://www.fs.fed.us/largewatershedprojects/](http://www.fs.fed.us/largewatershedprojects/)
- Watershed and Air Management: [http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/](http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/)
- Lands and Realty Management: [http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/](http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/)
- Recreation, Wilderness and Heritage Resources: [http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/](http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/)
- International Programs: [http://www.fs.fed.us/global/](http://www.fs.fed.us/global/)
- Research: [http://www.fe.fed.us/research/scientific.html](http://www.fe.fed.us/research/scientific.html)

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Once you select a link, please be sure to hit the “Refresh” button to ensure that you are loading the most current version of the web page!
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Positions listed are for outreach purposes only and are not full announcements. Interested individuals should contact the forests referenced or consult the USAJOBS website.

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