

# Developing Your NatureWatch Program

Greetings everyone! This presentation is designed to provide you with information for developing your District, Forest, or Regional NatureWatch Program, using National NatureWatch Program direction as a template. Although NatureWatch is often currently viewed as a “nice to do” effort, it is one of our goals to add a new level of legitimacy to NatureWatch, and to begin to think about it “Programmatically,” instead of it as a project-by-project effort. Feel free to use this presentation at your district, forest, and with your partners, to get your Program development efforts off to a good start.

## What is a Program?

- A “Social Entity” involving a group of individuals with a common mission.

What is a Program? A Program is a social entity, involving a group of individuals with a common mission. Programs are “personality driven,” often taking on the characteristics or personality of the person in charge - the program manager. We see it all the time in the Forest Service where the current program manager leaves his or her position for a new job and their replacement moves a program in a different direction. The key point here is that although your program may take on a different personality with you in charge, it still must conform to the National NatureWatch Program Mission, and contribute to the fulfillment of that mission. This is consistency – an important element to any Program success.

## NatureWatch Vision

- A highly visible Program that sets the Forest Service apart as a leader in providing wildlife, fish, and plant viewing opportunities, featuring a state-of-the-art (i.e. where viewing activities are not harmful to wildlife and other resources) and nationally recognized network of viewing areas and educational/interpretive programs.

The Program Vision provides us our mental picture of what we want the Forest Service NatureWatch Program to be. As District, Forest, or Regional level NatureWatch Program Manager, your job is to develop a Program vision and mission, and an accompanying strategy that describes how the program will fulfill its vision and mission.

## NatureWatch Vision Continued

- “Internally”, people are aware and conversant about the NatureWatch Program and proud of its achievements – they market the Program as part of everyday business, and are formally recognized when they perform exemplary work that fulfills the mission of the Program.

## NatureWatch Mission

- “To provide children and adults the opportunity to safely view, and participate in, activities and programs that raise their level of awareness and understanding of, wildlife, fish, and plants and their interactions and connection to ecosystems, landscapes, and people.”

The Program Mission communicates what the Program was developed to do, and guides us to ensure our Programs provide the necessary outputs to see that we are hitting the mark.

Use the National NatureWatch  
Program's Vision, Mission and  
Strategy as a template for your  
NatureWatch Program  
development.

The National NatureWatch Program presentation on this CD provides you direction, and a template, for quick and efficient program development. The National NatureWatch Program Vision, Mission, Strategy, and Program Elements are the essential building blocks to tier your Program to, and are provided in this presentation and on the DIY NatureWatch CD-ROM. Use these to help develop your Vision, Mission and Strategy. In addition to these building blocks, a "self-evaluation" for Program performance indicators is provided to help you assess your NatureWatch Program's current condition, and guide you to specifically identify and improve problem areas.

# Indicators of High Performance

- **Indicators of High Performance and Accountability**
- **Program Definition/Integration:** Naturewatch Program has clearly stated visions, missions, goals and objectives that are articulated in the Forest Plan or other National-level documents. The program is effectively integrated with other resource programs and consists of a "network" of strategically and geographically located viewing areas that work together with existing and planned educational/interpretive programs – common program priorities are identified and pursued jointly. There is continuity and integration between District and/or Forest programs. There is line officer and Regional Program Manager ownership as reflected by involvement in priority setting, program execution and performance assessment.
- **Work Force Capability:** Naturewatch "employees" demonstrate a high level of technical proficiency and operational capability. Region/Forest/Districts have access to Naturewatch technical expertise and other supporting skills (e.g. understanding of wildlife/fish/plant life history, conservation education, interpretation, understand needs for viewing site design to ensure animal safety, partnership development, marketing, engineering, recreation visitor "behavior," architectural design, etc.) are available to complement Naturewatch program implementation. Vacant Naturewatch positions or assignments are quickly advertised and filled. Awards for exemplary achievement are available and given frequently.
- **Accomplishments/Expenditures and Opportunities:** Accomplishments reflect a balanced program (a selection of "Eyes on Wildlife," "Fishwatch," "Celebrating Wildflowers," "National Fishing Week," and "Migratory Bird Day" efforts), including emphasis on new site construction, existing site restoration, production of Naturewatch products (e.g. brochures, posters, curricula, and signage), and Naturewatch presentations. The Region/Forest/District accurately enters all accomplishments/expenditures into the WFRP-MS and adequately describes projects and programs through well written narratives and quality photographs. Accomplishments relative to funding level are above average in quantity, quality, and balance/diversity. Opportunities are entered into WFRP-MS and accurately describe potential projects and programs through well written narratives and photographs or conceptual drawings.
- **Fiscal Accountability:** Financial support of the Naturewatch Program from Wildlife, Fisheries, TES/Botany, and Recreation is commensurate to that of other programs. Overhead assessments against Naturewatch funds are "fair" (i.e., made on the basis of benefiting function or proportional to allocations.) Benefiting function principles are adhered to. The Forest does not regularly carry-over Naturewatch funds, and when carry-over does occur, Naturewatch funds are not reprogrammed but used for Naturewatch Program activities.
- **Partnerships:** The Region/Forest/District demonstrates close working relationships with other Federal, state, and tribal management agencies. Development and maintenance of strong, effective partnerships is fostered and Naturewatch Program funds are effectively leveraged through partnerships to accomplish Naturewatch Program objectives. Partnerships are characterized by frequent interactions, routine cooperative efforts for a variety of Naturewatch activities; and demonstrated productive involvement of these groups in the decision making process. Communications are timely and appropriate on the Forest/District and with the Regional Office.

These are the Indicators of a High or Low Performance NatureWatch Program. Don't try to read them here unless you have really good eyes. The same goes for the sample worksheets on the next few slides. Visit the DIY NatureWatch CD, Program Development section for a full size document that is complete with a sample worksheet. You are strongly encouraged to read these indicators and complete the worksheet. I am confident you will find it valuable in developing your NatureWatch Program. The entire exercise should only take about 15 minutes.

# Indicators of Low Performance

- **Indicator of Low Performance and Accountability**
- **Program Definition/Integration:** Naturewatch Program lacks clearly stated goals and objectives, or they have not been incorporated in the Forest Plan or stated in other National-level program documents. The program has not been effectively integrated with other resource programs and does not consist of a "network" of strategically and geographically located viewing areas that work together with existing and planned educational/interpretive programs – common program priorities are identified and pursued independently. Program activities are pursued independently and viewed as a "nice to do" option. There is little or no continuity between Forest/District programs. Line officers and Regional Program Managers are not involved in priority setting, program execution, or performance assessment.
- **Work Force Capability:** Naturewatch "employees" lack technical proficiency and/or operational capability. Forests/Districts often do not have access to needed Naturewatch technical expertise or other supporting skills (understanding of wildlife/fish/plant life history, conservation education, interpretation, understand needs for viewing site design to ensure animal safety, partnership development, marketing, engineering, recreation visitor "behavior," architectural design, etc.) to complement Naturewatch program implementation. Vacant Naturewatch positions or assignments are non-existent or slow to be advertised and filled, or are surplus.
- **Accomplishments/Expenditures and Opportunities:** Accomplishments and expenditures do not reflect a balanced program (a selection of "Eyes on Wildlife," "Fishwatch," "Celebrating Wildflowers," "National Fishing Week," and "Migratory Bird Day" efforts), including emphasis on new site construction, existing site restoration, production of Naturewatch products (e.g. brochures, posters, curricula, and signage) or Naturewatch presentations. The Region/Forest/District does not accurately enter all accomplishments and expenditures into the WFRP-MS or adequately describes projects and programs through well written narratives and quality photographs. Accomplishments relative to funding level are below average in quantity, quality, and/or diversity. Opportunities are not entered into WFRP-MS and consequently do not accurately describe potential projects and programs through well written narratives and photographs or conceptual drawings.
- **Fiscal Accountability:** Financial support of the Naturewatch Program from Wildlife, Fisheries, TES/Botany, and Recreation is poor or not commensurate to that of other programs. Overhead assessments against Naturewatch funds are not "fair" (i.e., made on the basis of benefiting function or proportional to allocations.) Benefiting function principles are not adhered to. The Forest regularly carries-over Naturewatch funds, and when carry-over does occur, Naturewatch funds are not reprogrammed but used for other resource management activities.
- **Partnerships:** Forest working relationships with other Federal, state, and tribal management agencies are limited or ineffective. Partnership efforts contribute little to program effectiveness and program funds are not significantly leveraged through partnerships. Partners play little or no role in the decision making process. A solid understanding of FS Partnership rules and regulations is lacking and is a barrier to effective use of partnership benefits.

**Sample Naturewatch Program Evaluation Worksheet**

Region/Forest/ District	6/na /na	Rating for FY	03	Draft	or Final	X
<b>ELEMENT</b>		<b>Low - 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>High - 5</b>
<b>Program Definition/Integration</b>						
Visions, Missions, Goals and Objectives						5
Integration with other programs					4	
Continuity among Forests/Districts						
Line Officer/Regional PM Involvement					4	5
<b>Work Force Capability</b>						
Naturewatch "employees" proficiency						5
Availability of Support/Technical Skills						5
Naturewatch Positions/Assignments						
Employee Recognition						
<b>Accomplishments/Expenditures/Opps.</b>						
Balanced Program					4	
New/Current Site Construct./Re-Const.			3			
Naturewatch Products and Presentations					4	
Accomp./Expend./Opps. in WFRP					4	
<b>Fiscal Accountability</b>						
Funding support from other resources		2				
Benefiting Function Application						5
BFFS and Carrover Management					4	
<b>Partnerships</b>						
Working relationship with other agencies					4	
Partnership Development is active						5
Partnership Funds Leveraged						5
Partnership common and productive		2				
<b>Subtotals</b>		0	4	3	28	40
<b>Grand total</b>	75	<b>Average*</b> 4.2				

\* Average - Grand total divided by the number of elements rated.

**Performance and Accountability Score:**

Ratings are based on "average score" where:

- 1.0 - 2.5 = "Low"
- > 2.5 - 3.5 = "Moderate"
- > 3.5 = "High"

Naturewatch Program Evaluation Worksheet

To access the worksheet, go to the Program Development Section of the DIY NatureWatch CD-ROM

Region/Forest/ District	Rating for FY	03	Draft	or Final	
ELEMENT	Low - 1	2	3	4	High - 5
<b>Program Definition/Integration</b>					
Visions, Missions, Goals and Objectives					
Integration with other programs					
Continuity among Forests/Districts					
Line Officer/Regional PM Involvement					
<b>Work Force Capability</b>					
Naturewatch "employees" proficiency					
Availability of Support/ Technical Skills					
Naturewatch Positions/Assignments					
Employee Recognition					
<b>Accomplishments/Expenditures/Opps.</b>					
Balanced Program					
New/Current Site Construct/Re-Constr.					
Naturewatch Products and Presentations					
Accomp./Expend./Opps. in WFRP					
<b>Fiscal Accountability</b>					
Funding support from other resources					
Benefiting Function Application					
BIES and Carryover Management					
<b>Partnerships</b>					
Working relationship with other agencies					
Partnership Development is active					
Partnership Funds Leveraged					
Partnership common and productive					
Subtotals					
Grand total	Average*				

\* Average - Grand total divided by the number of elements rated.

**Performance and Accountability Score:**  
 Ratings are based on "average score" where:  
 1.0 - 2.5 = "Low"  
 > 2.5 - 3.5 = "Moderate"  
 > 3.5 = "High"

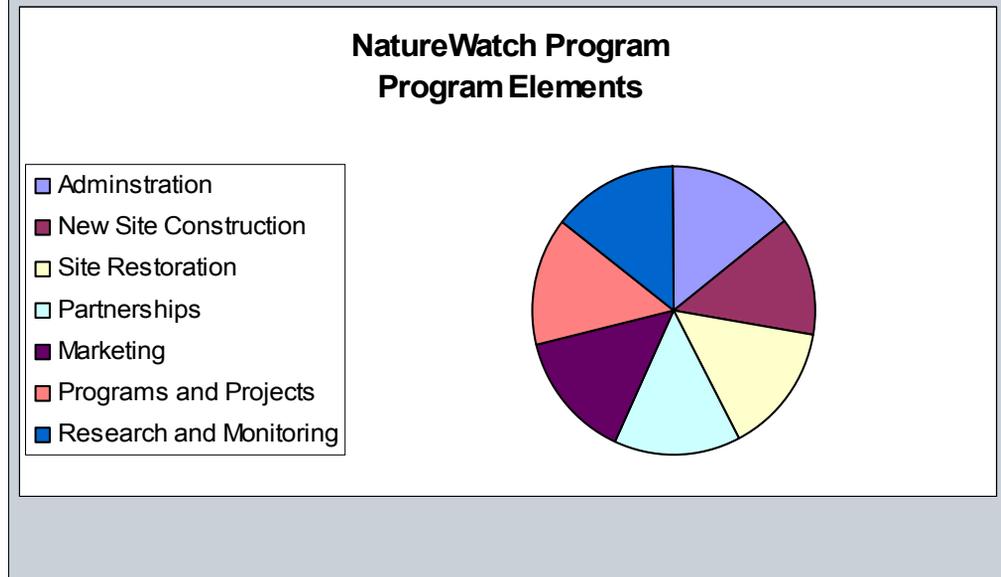
To access the worksheet, go to the Program Development Section of the DIY NatureWatch CD-ROM

## NatureWatch Program Strategy

- Tells how the Program is going to get there..... to achieve its vision and mission.

The Program Strategy describes how the Program is going to fulfill its vision and mission. Strategies do not have to be lengthy documents. In fact, the National NatureWatch Program Strategy is simply outlined on a slide presentation and was presented to the Washington Office and Regional Program Managers and Leaders. You are encouraged to use this strategy as a template to develop your own NatureWatch Program Strategy. The strategy contains goals and objectives that serve as individual tasks to undertake with a specific time frame for completion.

# NatureWatch Program Elements



The following are Program Elements for all NatureWatch Programs. What are NatureWatch Program Elements? They are developed and designed to provide an additional level of structure and form to the NatureWatch Program, and to aid field-level people in their individual NatureWatch program design and development. Incorporation of these elements into a NatureWatch Program generally ensures a “balanced” program. The amount of time and energy you put into each Program Element is up to you. Consequently, it will give your Program its own “personality,” and often outlines a strategy to follow. Feel free to add an additional “other” Program Element for specific conditions/issues for your particular program as needed. Please note the Program Elements are cross-referenced with WFRP data entry to tie the two together for additional consistency in the overall National NatureWatch Program.

## Program Element Definitions

**Administration:** Includes budget, staffing/personnel, employee recognition, training, strategic program planning, site visits (travel), regional/forest/district visits, conferences, etc. **When entering WFRP data you may include this work/dollars spent under a Naturewatch "salary and expenditure only" entry.**

**New Site Construction:** Includes time, dollars and labor towards new Naturewatch site planning and construction. A "site" refers to an actual structure that aids in the viewing of wildlife. In other words, taking a group of kids to watch salmon spawning at a river is not a viewing site. This would be considered a Naturewatch program or project (see below). **When entering WFRP data, enter data as a new site, including planning, and overhead costs.**

**Site restoration:** Includes time, dollars and labor toward site restoration. Examples may include adding or repairing signage, road/trail maintenance, replacing viewing platform boards/railings, etc. **When entering WFRP data, enter this data as the number of sites restored including planning and overhead costs.**

**Partnerships:** Includes development and management of new and existing partnerships that contribute dollars, or in-kind work towards Naturewatch program. **When entering WFRP project data remember to include partner dollar and in-kind contributions. In-kind labor is valued at \$10.00 per hour.**

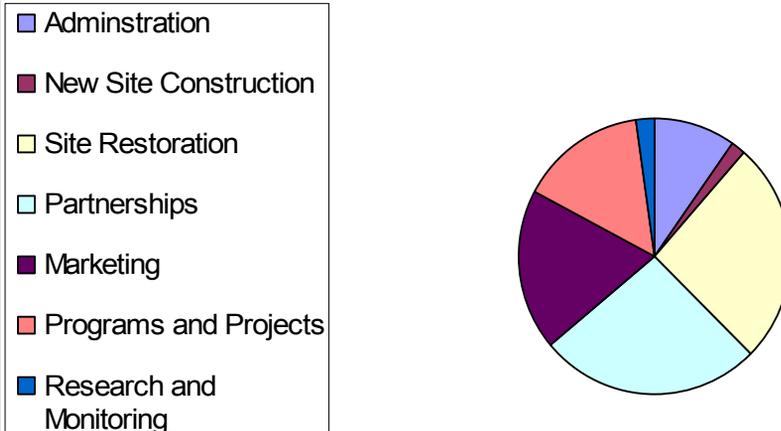
**Marketing:** Includes all marketing efforts and mediums designed to raise the level of awareness and visibility of the Naturewatch program. Examples might include brochures, magazine ads, newspaper articles, websites, radio announcements or programs, posters, presentations about the site, buttons, etc. **Refer to the WFRP-MS NatureWatch definitions located in the WFRP-MS home page for a complete explanation of "presentations" and "products."**

**Programs and Projects:** Includes the development of Naturewatch related (non-viewing site) efforts. Examples might include school programs where kids are taken on field trips to areas without viewing "sites," festivals (e.g. migratory birds), national fishing week celebrations, etc. **Refer to the WFRP-MS NatureWatch definitions located in the WFRP-MS home page for a complete explanation of "presentations" and "products."**

**Research and Monitoring:** This element is a relatively new idea, but an important one. Includes work or dollars spent towards monitoring numbers of people who visit the site, a study designed to assess the economic or social values of viewing sites, a study to assess attitudinal or behavioral changes of people who watch wildlife, etc. **Note: there is currently no WFRP data entry related to this program element.**

Don't freak out here and try to read the fine print. These are just the NatureWatch Program Elements definitions. Their tie to the WFRP-MS is in red. Read all about them by enlarging the slide or going to the NatureWatch Program Development section on the DIY NatureWatch CD to view a full-size version and/or print it. Spending a little time understanding these definitions will prove invaluable in the long run.

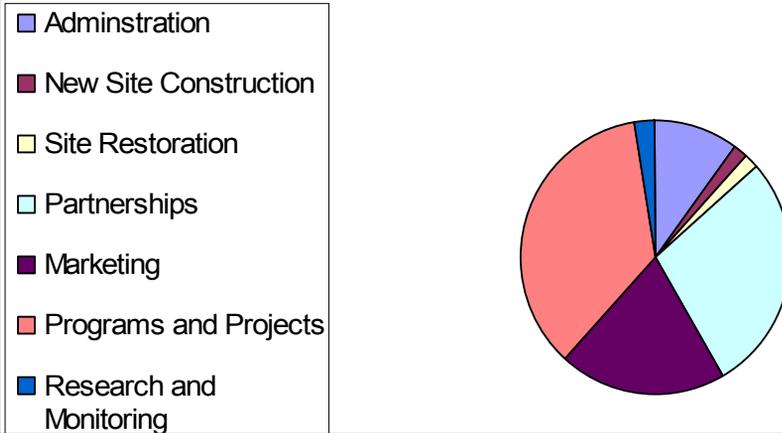
**Hypothetical program where strategy focuses on restoring existing viewing sites with partnerships.**



The next two slides illustrate how a program manager may decide to shape or design their particular program in order to make it operate more efficiently, given local considerations such as geographic area, and the skills of people involved in the Program. There are many fine examples of exemplary programs that you can find in the WFRP-MS database. Feel free to contact the Program Manager of these programs to discuss how they have achieved the level of success they currently have.

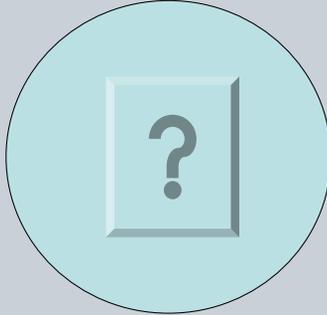
This particular example focuses on restoring existing viewing sites with partnerships. Notice that there is no “new site construction,” or any “research and monitoring” planned for in this strategy.

**Hypothetical program where strategy focuses on developing environmental education programs with partners, that tie to existing viewing sites.**



The second example illustrates a strategy that plans to raise partnership participation to help increase the quantity and quality of NatureWatch environmental education programs. Again, new site construction, which is often expensive, is not in the plans for the short-term. Yet, the increased partner base and establishing a reputation for high quality work may set the stage for a future new viewing site. This is what strategizing and planning is all about.

# What does your Strategy look like?



What does your NatureWatch Program Elements and Strategy look like? Take some time to sketch out how your strategy will drive your Program element mix. Then ensure you allocate the proper amount of time, energy, and dollars into each element to achieve the results you are seeking.

Think programmatically! For example, imagine a **network** of viewing areas that all tie to NatureWatch educational programs in local communities on your district or forest. Imagine a maintenance plan to accompany the sites, perhaps run by school children and/or volunteers. Add a community-based festival three years from now. Think programmatically!

# WFRP-MS

[http://wladat011661kstrat1/wfrpforest\\_2003.nsf/1a6c6762ab968a825a1007db661...06d5b709pdDocument&Click=8525GDAD0003B8B0ac097e9701e14088256a700c653758body0.2FC](http://wladat011661kstrat1/wfrpforest_2003.nsf/1a6c6762ab968a825a1007db661...06d5b709pdDocument&Click=8525GDAD0003B8B0ac097e9701e14088256a700c653758body0.2FC)



**Alaganik Angler Access Signs  
Cordova Ranger District  
Chugach National Forest  
USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region  
for Fiscal Year 2003**

**Objective/Purpose of Project:** The purpose of this project was to provide interpretation of natural cycles on the Copper River Delta that affect fish and fish resources along the newly installed Alaganik Slough Angler Access Trail.

**Methods or Techniques Used:** A fish crew member wrote most of the text for the signs with assistance from the district I&E staff. The artwork was created by a talented wildlife biologist on the district. Many district folks reviewed and edited the signs.

**Realized/Expected results:** Five signs were created. Topics covered include Pacific salmon life cycles, tide cycles, beaver pond cycles, human use cycles and an introduction to cycles effecting the Copper River Delta (like earthquake uplifts, glaciers, etc).

**Contact Person and telephone number:** Samantha Greenwood (907)424-4740 or Deyna Kuntzsch (907)424-4737

**Links to sites:**

Project Data:

Category	# New Sites	# Sites Restore Enhance	# Presentations	Under 18 Attendance	Over 18 Attendance	# Products	(a) P&M Program Mgmt. Plan \$	(b) P&M Overhead \$	(c) NFWL \$	(d) NFAF \$	(e) NFIIF \$	(f) NFTE \$	Other Res. \$	Total FS \$ \$ (a)+(b)+(c)+(d)+(e)+(f)
Totals	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	22,000	0	0	0	22,000
Fish Watch	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	22,000	0	0	0	22,000

Use the WFRP-MS to help develop and organize your NatureWatch Program. Utilize it to document and market your accomplishments, keep track of the dollars you have spent, and identify your opportunities. Share this information with your upper level program managers, line officers, and partners by sending them the information, or provide them with links to access the information themselves.

## The Budget Process

- **Become involved.**
- Your P3 and P4 points in BFES should match your NatureWatch "existing (current year) and opportunity" expenditure and accomplishment totals in WFRP.

Become involved with the Budget Process. Ensure some level of funding is dedicated to your NatureWatch Program. NatureWatch Program out-year budget planning in BFES is under NFWF, and under the sub-category "Products Produced." In other words this is where you request dollars for your NatureWatch Program. You also identify dollars for your NatureWatch Program at a Forest level in the WFRP Opportunities section. Although this is not considered a formal budget request, it does serve as an effective medium to communicate your needs to your program managers and partners. If you are on a District, you **MUST COORDINATE** your NatureWatch needs with your Forest-Level Program Manager if you have any expectation of reasonably accurate information moving upward. By the same token, if you are a Forest-Level Program Manager you **MUST COORDINATE** with the Districts to ensure their needs are heard and used. If neither one of these things have not happened, someone needs to pick up the phone!!!

## Partnerships are likely to be the backbone to your NatureWatch Program Success.

Visit the partnerships section on the DIY NatureWatch CD to help you develop and manage your partnerships.

Partnerships will commonly be the backbone to the success of your NatureWatch Program. Take every opportunity to develop partnerships in your community, and take advantage of any regional or national partnerships that already exist. The DIY NatureWatch CD is loaded with valuable partnership and grant writing materials that almost guarantee your partnership efforts will prosper.

## Program Management Workshop

- Develop your Program Management Skills
- When: April
- Where: Logan, Utah
- Contact: Shelly Witt (435) 753-4838

The Program Management Workshop is part of the Forest Service Continuing Education Program. It provides participants with an excellent training opportunity to help develop effective Wildlife, Fish, TES, and NatureWatch Program management skills. This one-week course is offered every April in Logan, Utah. Contact Shelly Witt at 435 753 4838 for detailed course information. This workshop is highly recommended.

## Explore Your DIY NatureWatch CD

- Set aside a few hours to explore the CD and keep a mental note of the materials that are available.
- Always ask yourself – is there anything on the DIY NatureWatch CD that can help me – before I begin a program or project?
- Download the entire CD on your hard drive so you don't have to load it every time you use it.

Utilize the DIY NatureWatch CD-ROM to help develop your Program. Spend a few hours exploring all of the materials that are available. Make a mental note of what you found and use the CD as your primary source for reference materials and new ideas. Don't re-invent the wheel and spend dollars on materials that have already been developed that you can use "as is," or modify to meet your needs. Download the entire CD on your hard drive so you don't have to load it every time you use it.

# Keys to Your Success

- Ownership
- Support
- Persistence
- Marketing
- Vision
- Patience
- Take Risks
- Commitment
- Recognize excellence
- Honesty – “A Good Heart!”

Here are a few suggestions that should prove key to your success. Keep them in mind throughout your effort and do not lose site of your vision. Field-level people are often heard saying that “NatureWatch Work” is some of the most rewarding work they have undertaken in their career. I hope that continues in the future.

**Thank You!**

Don Virgovic  
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Feel free to contact your National NatureWatch Program Leader, Don Virgovic, to discuss the development and management of your NatureWatch Program. And, thanks for being a NatureWatch Champion!