Monday
August 29
2005

TODAY'S NEWS
COOPERATIVE CONSERVATION
SAINT LOUIS · AUGUST 29, 30, & 31, 2005

Strengthening shared governance and citizen stewardship.

WELCOME TO ST. LOUIS

Citizen Stewards Meet on Common Ground

Welcome to the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, a national assembly initiated by President George W. Bush through an executive order aimed at strengthening conservation partnerships with states, tribes, and local communities and promoting citizen stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

St. Louis is an appropriate venue for this important summit, the first of its kind in four decades. As the starting point for the journeys of Lewis and Clark, Zebulon Pike, and John C. Fremont, and the gateway to America's western frontier, St. Louis has launched historic endeavors that defined the American character.

During the next three days, this great city will launch another national journey—a new conservation dialogue and philosophy for the 21st Century. This philosophy builds on the legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt, who exemplified our unique American spirit and convened the first White House Conservation Conference in 1908.

President Bush understands that when Americans act as citizen stewards the greatest results are achieved—unleashing energy, ingenuity, and creativity to enhance partnerships, promote innovation, and produce results.

Ranchers Diana and David Cook of Globe, Arizona, anticipate a rewarding week.

The key to the success of cooperative conservation is held by people who work close to and care about the land. It is the President's conviction that healthy landscapes and a prosperous citizenry go hand in hand.

This conference brings together more than 1,000 leaders from across the nation—from cities, reservations, and rural towns; from Alaska to Florida, from Maine to California. They represent conservation groups and private-sector companies; local, state, tribal, and federal agencies; recreation enthusiasts, ranchers, farmers, hunters and anglers.

Today, presenters will highlight some of the very best examples of cooperative conservation. Tomorrow, facilitated discussions will examine some of the most challenging aspects of working collaboratively, including how to build successful partnerships. Wednesday's plenary session begins with a synopsis of ideas generated at the conference. It also serves as a springboard for two spirited discussions on the status and future vision of cooperative conservation, featuring panelists from diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences featured at this conference. ■

MONDAY'S SCHEDULE

8:00 A.M. - OPENING PLENARY
Level One, Ferrara Theater

Presidential Video
Introduced by James L. Connaughton, Chairman, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Welcome
Francis Slay, Mayor of St. Louis
Featured Speaker: U.S. Senator Jim Talent

Keynote Addresses
James L. Connaughton
Gale A. Norton, Secretary of the Interior

9:00 A.M. - BREAK
Level One, Exhibit Hall 1

9:30 A.M. - CONCURRENT SESSIONS
Levels One and Two

11:00 A.M. - LUNCHEON PLENARY
Ballroom, Level Two

Address
Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense

12:30 P.M. - CONCURRENT SESSIONS
Levels One and Two

2:00 P.M. - BREAK
Level One, Exhibit Hall 1

2:30 P.M. - CONCURRENT SESSIONS
Levels One and Two

4:00 P.M. - BREAK
Level One Plaza Lobby
Level Two Atrium

4:30 P.M. - PLENARY SESSION
Level One, Ferrara Theater
Mike Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture

Showcase Speaker
Chuck Leavell, Author/Keyboardist for the Rolling Stones

5:30 P.M. – 7:30 P.M. EXPO RECEPTION
Level One, Exhibit Hall 1

White House Conference Recognition Certificates
Certificates honoring non-federal organizations highlighted in the Faces and Places *publication (one-page project descriptions) can be picked up during the course of the conference at the Department of the Interior Faces and Places exhibit space 430.*

EXPO SERVES AS PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM

From simple displays to elaborate shows featuring live animals, a couple hundred exhibitors are eager to share cooperative conservation stories and expand partnership networks.

Victoria Fox, with Southwest Strategy, says the expo is a dialogue for cooperative programs. "This is about information sharing and partnership modeling to better develop our own partnerships."

"We hope to see alliances that are here and then further collaborations," says James Smalley, with the National Fire Protection Association.

Bob Snieckus, with the National Resources Conservation Service, is building a sand dune and wetland in the exhibit hall to demonstrate coastal habitat restoration through cooperative conservation.

"A lot of people talk about cooperative conservation; we are really doing it on different scales," states Jesse Abrams, with the Ecological Restoration Institutes.

The Expo Hall reception takes place Monday 5:30-7:30 p.m.

PHOTO BY BRUCE CASLER

Volunteers remove invasive algae from beaches and coral reefs in Oahu.

Hawaii Coral Reef Native Algae Restoration

Hawaii's reefs are home to an abundance of marine invertebrates and fishes, many of which are only found in Hawaii. One of the greatest threats to the coral reefs and other marine ecosystems is the spread of invasive, non-native marine algae, specifically *Gracilaria salicornia*, also known as gorilla ogo. This species of algae was once a source of agar, which was used as a solidifying agent in everything from ice cream to eye cream.

The algae has begun to dominate the ocean floor, since it has no natural predators in Hawaii. As alien alga spreads, it grows over and smothers coral reefs and native algal communities, killing extensive areas of native habitat. Removing this alga from high priority coral reefs is key to the long-term survival of Hawaii's reefs and the abundance of life that thrives there.

"Algal blooms are becoming common worldwide and can decimate coral reef ecosystems by overgrowing corals and decreasing biodiversity. No efforts currently exist to control invasive algae in the tropics on such a large scale as our efforts in Hawaii," said Anne Rosa, Marine Conservation Project Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii. "To reach a greater scale, we have employed multiple strategies including the community-based initiatives of the Hawaii Coral Reef restoration project, as well as the development of new algae removal technology."

Volunteers, local communities, businesses, government agencies, and other organizations are working together to remove *G. salicornia* from the beaches and waters and to begin to restore Hawaii's coral reefs. Native species restoration has begun in Kaneohe Bay and Waikiki, Oahu, and has evolved into one of the largest grassroots partnerships in the state. New mechanical and biological techniques for removing invasive algae has removed more than 88 tons of *G. salicornia* at more than a dozen events over the past three years.

Partner organizations in this project include: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii, State Division of Aquatic Resources, University of Hawaii, Waikiki Aquarium, Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, the Hawaii Coral Reef Research Initiative, Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Reef Check, private dive operators, local businesses, local community groups, and schools. ■

Reception Brings Out the Animal in Conference Attendees

It was a wild night of pythons and African lemurs as the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation kicked off with a welcoming reception at the Renaissance Grand Hotel.

The two-hour event provided attendees an opportunity to get to know each other and various Sea World wildlife like an African hawk, red-ruffed lemur, Burmese python, kangaroo, and Clydesdale horse.

"I'm a wildlife biologist, so that was one of the conference highlights for me," Debbie Pressman, with the USDA Forest Service, said. "If this is how it begins, it couldn't get any better."

The event provided conference attendees with an opportunity to learn more about each other and the various conservation projects that each agency supports in a relaxed atmosphere.

"It's a good mixture of people here. It is better than some of the conferences I have been to in the past," Alan O'Neil, Outside Las Vegas Foundation, said. "It's impressive so far. Everything so far has run very smoothly." ■

Conservation Buffers Create Corridors of Care

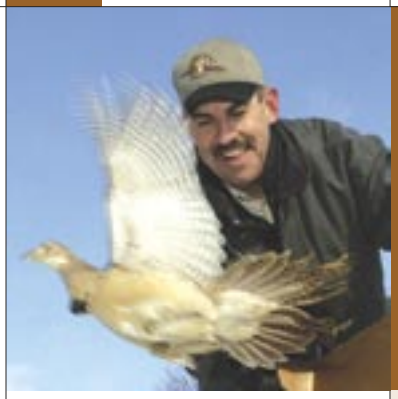
They're natural wonders and they work. They improve air and water quality, enhance habitat, and beautify the landscape.

They're called conservation buffers. Establishing them takes time, money, and commitment from private landowners.

"In other words," said Rick Van Klaveren of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, "a successful conservation buffer program relies upon effective education, promotion and outreach, coupled with technical and financial assistance."

Riparian buffers, strips of undisturbed vegetation along waterways, help intercept pollution, guard against soil erosion, improve water quality, reduce flooding, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, and restore biodiversity. A group of conservation organizations and government agencies spearheaded by Trees Forever, Pheasants Forever, and others, developed partnerships for funding and outreach to landowners and producers to showcase benefits of using trees, shrubs, and grasses as a natural buffer.

A demonstration and research site was developed by researchers at Iowa State University to provide practical examples and advice for establishing and maintaining the buffers. "All along our primary focus was the needs of the producer," Van Klaveren said, "which was key to the partnership's success. In the end we all benefit from the Iowa Buffer Team partnership. Farmers received financial incentives while we all benefit from the increased water quality and wildlife habitat." ■



"Without the trust, dedication, and hard work of farmers, none of these wildlife habitat projects could have been possible," says Jose Taracido, a wildlife specialist at California University (in Pennsylvania), shown releasing a North Dakota wild pheasant into the Pike Run Watershed in Washington County, Pennsylvania.

Partners Preserve Links to Land

Cooperative conservation initiatives not only restore and protect landscapes and watersheds but preserve our cultural heritage.

In western Pennsylvania, conservationist Jose Taracido works with farmers, students, environmentalists, and agencies to preserve the agricultural character of the Lower Susquehanna Watershed.

Kansas rancher Tom Moxley works to preserve the tallgrass prairie and area ranching communities through the Tallgrass Legacy Alliance, a local conservation partnership.

Alice Wellford organized a citizens group to combat an invasion of reed-like weeds choking pristine freshwater tidal marshes along Virginia's Rappahannock River—a task later assumed by the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.

Hydrologist Don Rosenberry works with a local group to restore Puget Sound's shoreline. The partnership is a cooperative effort among government agencies, tribes, industries, and private environmental groups.

Octogenarian Maria Bingham, from Johnson City, Tennessee, still does volunteer work on the Appalachian Trail because she believes people should never lose their connection with nature. ■

"As a valley landowner, I became concerned when this invasive weed began to take over our wetlands. If left unchecked, this invasive will take over beneficial marsh plants, such as big cordgrass, wild rice, and joint-vetch, a federally-threatened species."

Alice Wellford, Rappahannock Valley

"If we are to save the Kansas tallgrass prairie, the first step is to keep the ranchers on the landscape. A level of trust combines ideas and funding sources, turning concepts and dreams into habitat."

Tom Moxley, Tallgrass Legacy Alliance

"We believe that the real life we can offer is life of the planet earth. We have enclosed our families in man-made structures away from the natural world and they lose appreciation for the out-of-doors."

Maria Bingham, Johnson City, TN

"Collaboration in the development of this science base promotes a shared commitment to restoration priorities, ensuring greater efficiency and synergy of results."

Don Rosenberry, Hood Canal, WA

CONSERVATION CORNER

Efforts Benefit Base Ecosystem

By Major Linda Pepin, USAF

Environmental resource managers at Arnold Air Force Base are working with diverse group of scientists and natural resource experts to enhance the biodiversity of the 40,000-acre base in central Tennessee.

"Ecosystem management is a challenge," said Richard McWhite, the base's natural resources manager. "Partnerships with experts in a variety of scientific fields and disciplines are essential to ensure we make solid science-based decisions."

A Conservation Core Team was set up to provide technical expertise to help develop monitoring and management philosophies for the base's natural resource program. The Core Team's conservation efforts focus largely on The Barrens, a prairie-like landscape within Tennessee's Eastern Highland Rim. Implementing strategies developed by the Core Team, Arnold AFB has restored 2,000 acres of Barrens habitat, home to 47 rare species.

The core team is composed of experts from Arnold AFB, Middle Tennessee State University, The Nature Conservancy, Tennessee Army National Guard, Tennessee Natural Areas Program, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, University of the South, University of Tennessee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey. ■

PHOTO BY KEVIN FITCH

Research at Arnold AFB includes monitoring Kentucky ladyslippers.

Jumpstart Your Conservation Work

By Deborah Fleischer, Green Impact

The tall, healthy, native hardwoods in the atrium of America's Center are no ordinary trees. Hidden in their roots is a conservation innovation that you want to know about.

After 200 days, while hardwoods grown from ordinary seedlings reach only 18 inches, take decades to produce fruit, and have a poor survival rate, those donated by Forrest Keeling Nursery, a family-owned Missouri business, stand more than six feet tall, producing acorns and wildlife benefits in only 3 to 4 years. With a 90 to 95 percent survival rate—they can stay alive in water for 30 to 40 days, surviving major flood events. This accelerated growth, survivability, and early acorn production is based on a revolutionary, cutting-edge process developed at Forrest Keeling Nursery. Known as root production method (RPM®) trees, these exceptional trees have potential to transform the most challenging restoration projects—degraded landscapes, wetlands, bottomland forests or reforestation projects—into a conservation success story.

Trees grown by the root production method® feature denser roots.

Wayne Lovelace, President of Forrest Keeling Nursery, spent 18 years pioneering a method to increase successful transplanting of hardwood trees, resulting in a taller tree with a higher probability of survival and earlier fruiting. "The RPM® process succeeds where most others have failed."

"To get an oak to produce the number of acorns within three to four years that we see using RPM® is almost magical," remarked Dr. Garrett, Director of the Center for Agroforestry at the University of Missouri. "Why plant bare rooted seedlings, when they aren't going to survive? Why not plant fewer RPM® trees per acre, and get 95 percent guaranteed survival? It makes good economic sense." ■

Go to www.fknursery.com for details.

NEWS TEAM

Executive Editor
Dan DuBray - Press Secretary, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Managing Editor - Content
Al Nash - Public Affairs Specialist, Office of Public Affairs, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Managing Editor - Design & Production
Diane T. Liggett - Editor, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, WV

Assistant Editor
Neal Herbert - Visual Information Specialist, Canyonlands National Park, Moab, UT

Senior Photographer
Tami Heileman - Photographer to the Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Contributing Editor
Frank Quimby - Editor, "People, Land and Water," U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Correspondent
Brenda Carlson - Regional Public Affairs Specialist, USDA Farm Service Agency, College Station, TX.

Correspondent
Theresa Eisenman - Public Affairs Office, NOAA National Weather Service, Silver Spring, MD.

Correspondent
Thomas Peske - Public Affairs Office, Defense Logistics Agency, Department of Defense, Washington, D.C.

Correspondent
Mark Szymanski - Speechwriter, Office of Public Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.

Writer/Photographer
Ron Nichols - Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Spokane, WA.

Photographer
Andy Pernick, Photographer, Lower Colorado Regional Photo Lab, Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, NV.

This newsletter is printed on New Leaf Primavera gloss 101# text, 80 percent recycled with 40 percent post-consumer waste, processed chlorine free.