



Newsletter No. 33

Fall 2015

## **2020 Pounds Of Trash Collected For The French Creek Cleanup!**

The weather cooperated for the 23rd Annual French Creek Cleanup which was a record-breaking one. Over all there were 806 participants collecting 42,975 pounds of trash from the French Creek watershed! Our group contributed 2020 pounds of that, removed from the Erie National Wildlife Refuge. Just 80 pounds short of winning another trophy this year. We'll be back next year for sure!

The French Creek Cleanup is an event sponsored by the The French Creek Valley Conservancy, an organization dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the exceptional water quality, natural habitat, biological diversity and recreational opportunities of the French Creek Watershed in Northwest Pennsylvania.



Thanks to Phi Gamma Delta for their participation! A good time was had by all....  
Photo Credit: Michael Vargo

## **Nature Photo Contest Winners Announced!**

The Erie National Wildlife Refuge, in cooperation with the Friends of Erie National Wildlife Refuge and the Presque Isle Audubon Society, announced the winners of their biannual Nature Photo Contest at a reception held October 18th. The winners are:

Plant Life: First - "White Champion" by Tim Lyons; Second - "Late Summer Bloom" by Patricia Wigham; Third - "Tiger Lily" by Erica Senyo

Wildlife: First - "Squirrel" by Erica Senyo; Second - "The Bread Winner" by Ricardo Gilson; Third - "Cooper's Hawk" by Tim Lyons

Landscape: First - "Autumn Waterfall" by Lisa Helmbreck; Second - "Trees" by Olivia Wyman; Third - "Memories" by B J Spitzig

This year both special awards were won by the same person. Erica Senyo won the "Best Photo Taken on the Erie National Wildlife Refuge" award with her photo "Wooded Pathway" and the "Best Student Photo" award with "Squirrel".

A special thank you goes out to the judges Mike Saletra, Tim Kirk and Heather Reichel.

## **Three New Members Elected to Board of Directors**

At the Annual Meeting, held November 14, 2015, three new members were elected to the Friends of ENWR board of directors. Ken & Vicki Pratt and Eileen Copeland were all nominated and elected to serve a two year term on the board. We want to welcome all of them and we are looking forward to working with them in the coming year.

Current members Kathleen Palmer, Lisa Helmbreck, Michael Vargo, Richard Eakin, Linda Anderson, and Autumn White were all reelected to another term as well.

The evening's activities also included a ENWR walk, a pot luck dinner, door prizes and a very interesting and informative presentation by Vicki Muller, refuge manager at ENWR, about the projects and people of the refuge in 2015.

Besides the election, the business portion of the meeting reviewed some of our recent and ongoing projects including the photo contest, owl prowl, and the milkweed-pollinator garden. New business included the discussion of programs to be scheduled in 2016 and the theme of Summer Fest.

While we always take a break in December, for this year only, circumstances has us moving the January meeting to February 1. This meeting will take the place of both the January and February meetings. As always any member or interested person may attend the board meetings. Your input is always welcome.

# More Help for Monarchs

By Dan Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

I spent much of the morning on August 20 at beautiful Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge with Senator Amy Klobuchar working on monarch butterfly conservation. Life is good!

Senator Klobuchar is an exceptional advocate for monarchs in Congress, and it is stirring to hear the passion she has for them. As a bonus: We had plenty of kids with us, ready to become monarch scientists and add to our data on the butterfly.

By now, I think a lot of people know that time is running out to secure the future of the monarch butterfly, one of North America's most recognizable wildlife species.

As recently as 1996, the estimated population of monarchs wintering in Mexico topped 1 billion. This year, the Mexican overwintering population numbered only about 56.5 million butterflies.

Some of the problem has been blamed on timber harvesting in Mexico, climate change and disease – and we must address those factors – but the accelerating conversion of native prairie habitat in Midwestern states to crop production and livestock grazing has hurt the monarch and other pollinators.

Working with partners – such as the Monarch Joint Venture, the National Wildlife Federation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – we're seeking to restore and enhance more than 200,000 acres of habitat for monarchs on public and private lands this year, while also supporting more than 750 schoolyard habitat projects and pollinator gardens nationwide. We're also reaching out to our counterparts in Canada and Mexico to work together to save this North American insect. But we can do more.

That's why I'm proud to announce we have committed to spending \$4 million starting in October to support partnership-driven, landscape-scale monarch conservation projects. This funding will enable us to focus with our partners on conserving breeding and migration habitat in priority areas.

These places include spring breeding areas in Texas and Oklahoma, summer breeding habitat in Minnesota and other Midwest Corn Belt states, and areas west of the Rockies important for the western monarch population.

We'll also expand work with partners to increase the availability of seed for native milkweed and nectar plants; education and outreach programs; and other large-scale efforts across multiple geographies.

Why all the attention on monarchs? It's not just because they're beautiful, an integral part of North America's wildlife, and representative of other pollinators.

The monarch is also the perfect species to introduce kids to conservation and help them develop a love for nature. Few other beloved, well-known species thrive in backyards like monarchs when the right habitat is created for them.

I've planted native milkweed with kids across the nation this year. To see the smiles on their faces as they dig in the dirt is incredibly uplifting.

Together, we can ensure that the monarch continues to be seen and enjoyed across the nation's landscape. I'm optimistic we will succeed.

## **New Deputy Chief of Refuge System**

Shaun Sanchez brings rare experience from all three levels of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to his new position as deputy chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. He assumed the position of second-in-command in October.

Over his Service career, Sanchez has worked in four regions. Most recently, he was chief of the Refuge System Division of Budget, Performance, and Workforce. In that post, he helped set and manage annual Refuge System performance measures and direct a comprehensive evaluation of the Refuge System's overall effectiveness in delivering its mission.

Earlier in his career, he has served as deputy assistant regional director in the Southeast regional office in Atlanta; manager at Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Nevada; deputy refuge manager at Yukon Delta Refuge in Alaska; and refuge manager at Anahuac Refuge in Texas.

Shaun began his Service career as a student trainee at two Southwestern refuges. He holds a biology degree from New Mexico Highlands University. Sanchez is the son of Martin and Joyce Sanchez of Las Vegas, N.M.

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