

21 September 1994

Acting ARD, Refuges and Wildlife, FWS, Atlanta, GA.

Attention; Carol Phillips.

FY 1994 Endangered Species Recovery Activities on St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge.

Refuge Manager, FWS, St. Vincent NWR, Apalachicola, FL.

St. Vincent NWR received endangered species recovery funds (1113) for the red wolf (25,000) and sea turtles (3,000) in FY 1994. The refuge also hosted nesting and wintering southern bald eagles, a population of indigo snakes, migratory peregrine falcons, piping plovers, and wood storks, and several candidate species of plants and animals. All were monitored on a regular basis and protection was provided for them with refuge funds.

Red Wolves

Red wolf funds were spent to provide approximately half the salary for the refuge wildlife biologist. His activities included: Oversight of the red wolf program for the refuge; care and maintenance of the wolves while held in captivity prior to release; radio tracking the wolves three times per week during most of the year; daily tracking during our three, five day, hunt periods; tracking the wolves for one 24 hour period per week from March - August, during whelping and pup rearing season; responding to information requests and giving programs to groups about the red wolf project; and coyote control. He also coauthored "Protocol For Island Propagation Projects" to be published as a Red Wolf Management Series Technical Report, and authored a proposal to study the interactions of red wolves and coyotes on St. Vincent NWR.

The remaining funds were spent on a portion of the fuel and maintenance of the vehicle used for red wolf activities, a portion of the travel to obtain training and a wolf from Alligator River NWR, pen maintenance, radio tracking supplies and maintenance of tracking gear, repair and maintenance of the red wolf exhibit, and purchase and maintenance of wolf trapping gear.

Sea Turtles

Part of the sea turtle funds were spent to cover approximately one pay period of the refuge wildlife biologist's salary. Nine miles of beach were surveyed for sea turtle emergences daily from 15 May through 30 September. Each emergence was examined for eggs and all nests were protected with screening. Sea turtle funds were used to purchase screening and stakes used for sea turtle nest protection. After hatching or 75 days after the eggs were laid all nests were examined to determine nest success. All unhatched eggs and hatchlings were collected and frozen.

St. Vincent Island has a large population of raccoons and feral hogs. Both represent serious threats to the survival of sea turtle eggs and hatchlings. We purchased raccoon traps with sea turtle funds. We managed an aggressive trapping and control program to reduce the threat that raccoons pose to sea turtle nests. We also managed an aggressive hog control program. The majority of the costs for these control efforts were paid for with refuge funds.

Sea turtle funds paid for the wildlife biologist to attend the 14th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation. He presented a paper "Effects of Predator Control on Sea Turtle Nest Success on the Barrier Islands of Apalachicola Bay." Sea turtle funds were used for some of the graphics used in the presentation. Reprint requests for the manuscript were numerous but refuge funds covered the costs.

We cooperated with our Panama City Field Office with the collection of eggs and hatchlings for the study entitled "Effects of Environmental Contaminants on Loggerhead Sea Turtles."

The biologist prepared a "Sea Turtle Protocol For St. Vincent NWR." It was reviewed and approved by both state and federal sea turtle coordinators and will guide our sea turtle conservation efforts on the refuge.

Administrative needs and assistance by other staff with red wolf and sea turtle activities were covered by refuge funds.

Donald J. Kosin