

INTRODUCTION

The 8,777.42-acre Erie National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) consists of two divisions approximately ten miles apart in northwestern Pennsylvania in Crawford County.

1. Sugar Lake Division

The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved Erie NWR on March 11, 1958. Establishment of the refuge occurred on May 22, 1959 when the first tract was purchased. Under the original and subsequent approvals, 107 tracts totaling 5,205.96 acres were acquired.

2. Seneca Division

The Seneca Division was approved by the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission on June 6, 1967. Twenty-seven tracts totaling 3,571.46 acres have been acquired. Approximately 888.15 acres remain to be acquired.

The topography of northwestern Pennsylvania resulted from the retreat of the last continental ice age glacier. This hilly country in the upper reaches of the Allegheny River watershed is dotted with numerous lakes, swamps and marshes in association with meandering valley streams.

Historically, the area was an important nesting and resting area for waterfowl using the western portion of the Atlantic Flyway. During the 1800s, intensive logging and farming coupled with the near extinction of the beaver resulted in the loss of much valuable wetland habitat. The corresponding decline in waterfowl use eventually led to the creation of the Erie NWR.

Contrary to the popular belief, the refuge is not on the shores of Lake Erie. As the crow flies, the Seneca Division is 25 miles south and the Sugar Lake Division is 35 miles south of Lake Erie.

The name, Erie, comes from the Eriez Indians. This small tribe resided along the shores of what is now known as Lake Erie. In the mid-17th century, the Iroquois Indians defeated the Eriez and the tribe ceased to exist as a distinct group. In 1969, the refuge was officially named after this extinct Eriez Indian Tribe. Unfortunately, the name, Erie, is more closely associated with the area north of the refuge because of Lake Erie, the City of Erie and Erie County. This causes much confusion especially when the public is trying to locate the refuge for the first time.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ Retirement of Refuge Manager
- ★ Retirement of Outdoor Recreation Planner
- ★ Temporary details - five acting refuge managers
- ★ Hire of new Refuge Manager
- ★ Temporary detail of Wildlife Biologist from Rhode Island
- ★ Hire of new STEP Clerk
- ★ Radon remediation
- ★ Ducks Unlimited projects on refuge
- ★ Office rehabilitation completed
- ★ New Dodge Caravan received
- ★ New Ford Ranger truck received
- ★ Conversion of L-9000 dump to truck tractor
- ★ New Fontaine trailer received
- ★ PA Junior Duck winner places in Top Five in Nation

Climatic Highlights

Erie National Wildlife Refuge - 2001				
Month	Temperatures*		Precipitation**	
	<u>Low</u>	<u>High</u>	<u>Snow</u>	<u>Rain</u>
January	46	5	1.37	24.56
February	63	7	1.36	11.0
March	54	6	2.45	28.0
April	82	22	2.72	1.0
May	83	31	2.80	
June	90	42	3.16	
July	91	41	3.36	
August	93	48	3.55	
September	85	35	3.99	
October	76	27	4.87	2.0
November	69	25	2.89	
December	69	10	2.86	6.60
		TOTALS	35.38	73.16

*Degrees Fahrenheit

**inches

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Monitoring and Studies

1a. Surveys and Censuses

The wildlife biologist position is presently vacant. Marnee Gormley left the station in March. Surveys conducted on the refuge in 2001 are as follows:

Landbird Bird (Ron Harrell)

Shorebird (Burnie Kessner)

Frogs (Richard Schultheis)

Grassland Bird Survey (Doug Couchman)

Woodcock Survey (PA Game Commission)

Pennsylvania Herpetological Atlas Project (Mark Lethaby) (see Exhibit 1)

1b. Studies and Investigations

Anuran Study (Richard Schultheis)

Grassland Study (Burnie Kessner)

Impoundment Study (Burnie Kessner)

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HABITAT RESTORATION

2a. Wetland Restoration: On Refuge

No activity to report.

Wetland Restoration: Off Refuge

No activity to report.

2b. Upland Restoration: On Refuge

No activity to report.

2c. Riverine Restoration

No activity to report.

2d. Deepwater/Coral Reef Restoration

No activity to report.

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HABITAT MANAGEMENT

3a. Water Level Management

Robert Battin, Maintenance Mechanic, maintained and monitored the water control structures. Pool K and Pool 7S were used in the Shorebird Study. Pool K was the TREATMENT impoundment for 2001. Water levels were lowered during late April. The objective was to allow the water to warm up, thus stimulating invertebrate activity and development.

Pool 7S was the CONTROL impoundment for 2001. To make a fair comparison to the treatment impoundment, some shorebird habitat was created in the impoundment. Water levels were lowered to allow some mudflat areas around the perimeter to be exposed during late April.

3b. Moist Soil Management

No activity to report.

3c. Graze/Mow/Hay

No activity to report.

3d. Farming

Leigh Bowes - Seneca Division
Jim Furry - Sugar Lake Division
Bill Lennox - Seneca Division
Phil Parker - Sugar Lake Division
Jon Reese - Sugar Lake Division
Ed Simcheck - Seneca Division
Charlie Woolstrum - Sugar Lake Division

3e. Forest Management

No activity to report.

3f. Prescribed Burning

No prescribed burns. However, a wild fire believed to be arson occurred along Pool 9 access road.



3g. Pest Plant Control

No activity to report.

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FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

4a. Bird Banding



2001 Bluebird Nesting Season Results	
Eggs Laid	315
Hatched	229
Banded	175
Fledged	162
Died before Banding	54
Died after Banding	13

Gary Sliter, Volunteer, managed the bluebird nest boxes on the refuge.

4b. Disease Monitoring and Treatment

No activity to report.

4c. Reintroductions

No activity to report.

4d. Provide Nest Structures

Wood duck nest boxes were maintained by Robert Battin, Maintenance Mechanic.

4e. Pest, Predator and Exotic Animal Control

No activity to report.

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COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

5a. Interagency Activities

No activity to report.

5b. Tribal Coordination

No activity to report.

5c. Private Land Activities (excluding restoration)

No activity to report.

5d. Oil and Gas Activities

No activity to report.

5e. Cooperative/Friends Organizations

No activity to report.

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RESOURCE PROTECTION

6a. Law Enforcement

A refuge sign on Route 27 was destroyed by a drunken driver in January. Acting Manager Don Lima coordinated the report with the Pennsylvania State Police and the sign was replaced by the new manager, Jeff Haas.



6b. Permits &

Economic Use

Trapping

The Refuge Trapping Plan, approved in July 1987, and amended in May 1990, designated trapping units. Ten trapping units are on the Sugar Lake Division of the refuge and seven trapping units are on the Seneca Division of the refuge.

Refuge trapping units continued to be distributed according to the bid system. We award one unit to each bidder and the bidder has exclusive rights to harvest furbearers on the assigned unit for the season. Bids from 20 trappers were opened and 15 units were awarded. Trapping Units I, J, K, L, and M will only be open until February 1, 2002 to protect eagle nesting habitat. Total revenue received was \$1,011.05.

Trapping season for coyotes, foxes, opossums, raccoons, skunks, and weasels opened October 15 and will close February 24, 2002. Mink and muskrat trapping season opened November 18 and will close January 14, 2002. Beaver trapping season opened December 26 and will close March 31, 2002. The beaver trapping limit is 10 daily, and 20 per season for the refuge.

Free Special Use Permits

Free Special Use Permits were issued for fox, raccoon and coyote hunting on the refuge.

6c. Contaminant Investigations

No activity to report.

6d. Contaminant Cleanup

No activity to report.

6e. Water Rights Management

No activity to report.

6f. Cultural Resources

No activity to report.

6g. Land Acquisition Support

No activity to report.

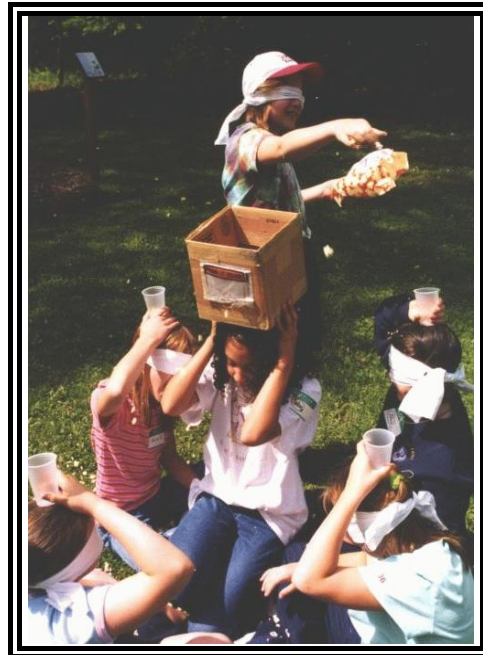
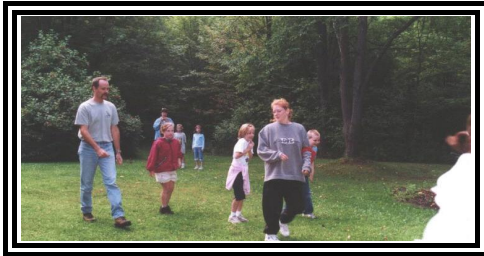
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PUBLIC EDUCATION AND RECREATION

7a. Provide Visitor Services

Scouting

Burnie Kessner, Bio Tech, coordinated an outing for a local Girl Scout troop.



Fishing

Visitors enjoyed fishing on the refuge in the designated pools.

Hunting

Archery

Antlered - 4

Antlerless - 1

Muzzleloader

Antlerless - 3

Rifle

Antlered - 34

Antlerless - 27

Trails

No new trails were constructed this year. Although trail improvement projects on existing trails are always an ongoing effort.



Wildlife Observation

Two eagle nests fledged young during 2001. The Seneca Division nest successfully fledged one young and the Sugar Lake Bottoms nest successfully fledged two young. The nests were monitored by Brenda Peebles, Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Visitation

7b. Outreach

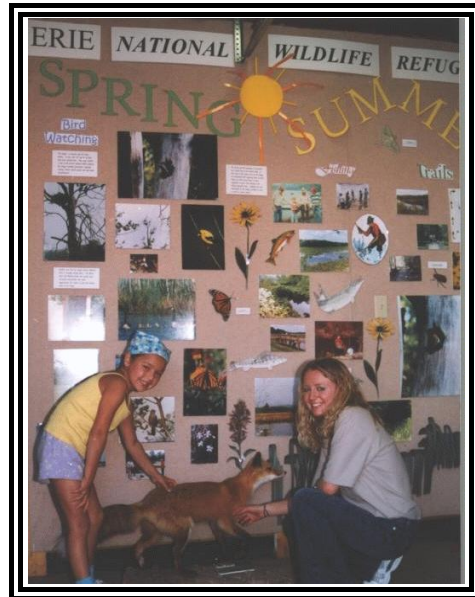
Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest

ORP Janet Marvin coordinated her final Junior Duck



Stamp contest this year. Judging the 692 entries were Pete Brown, Ducks Unlimited, Jack Paluh, Wildlife Artist, Gerry Putt, Wildlife Artist, Joan Howlett, Presque Isle Audubon Chapter of the National Audubon Society, and Bill Mantzell, retired waterways patrolman with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

Anna DeVelde, an 18-year-old home school student of Franklin, Pennsylvania, won Best-of-Show with her colored pencil drawing of greater white-fronted geese. Anna placed in the Top Five in national competition.



On June 28, a group of nine clients from Vallonia Group, Meadville, visited the refuge for a tour of the visitor center and a picnic.



Sarah Armstrong designed the exhibit for the Crawford County Fair in August.

An exhibit was displayed at the Pymatuning Waterfowl Expo, Linesville PA in September.

The Presque Isle Audubon Society hosted its eighth biennial photography contest at the refuge in November. Twenty-seven (27) photographers entered 88 wonderful photographs in the categories of wildlife, landscape, and plant life. Judges were Jean Stull Cunningham, Rick James and Jack Hanrahan.



8 PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

8a. Comprehensive Management Planning

No activity to report.

8b. General Administration

Funding 2001

Refuge Operations

Biological Studies

YCC Camp



1261
\$325,100

1261
5,660
1261
17,000



Annual Maintenance

1262

22,000

Refurbish headquarters	1262	100,000
Replace van	1262	30,000
Replace lowboy trailer	1262	18,000
Replace S-10	1262	24,000
Challenge Grant-I&EE	6351	2,000
RX, Pine Slash	9263	4,400
RX, Grasslands	9263	1,700
RX-Training	9263	5,000

Total \$606,860

Personnel

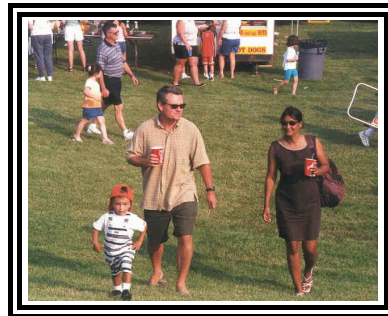
The following is a list of employees who were members of the staff of Erie NWR in 2001:

<u>Permanent Full Time</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>EOD Date</u>	<u>Departure Date</u>
Tom Mountain, Refuge Manager	GS-12	07/08/1984	01/31/2001
Don Lima, Acting Refuge Manager			
Jeff Shryer, Acting Refuge Manager			
Mike Mitchell, Acting Refuge Manager			
Steve Kahl, Acting Refuge Manager			
Graham Taylor, Acting Refuge Manager			
Jeffrey W. Haas, Refuge Manager	GS-12	09/09/2001	
Vacant, Deputy Refuge Manager			
Janet A. Marvin, ORP	GS-11	11/06/1966	05/03/2001
Marnee J. Gormley, Biologist	GS-11	05/29/1994	03/23/2001
Joyce E. Sliter, Office Assistant	GS-6	02/12/1989	
Robert E. Battin, Maint. Mechanic	WG-9	03/14/1977	



Temporary Term Appointment Full

Donald E. Stover, Eng. Equip. Operator



Time

WG-8

03/21/1993



Temporary STEP Appointment

Jennifer Cybulski, Clerk

GS-2

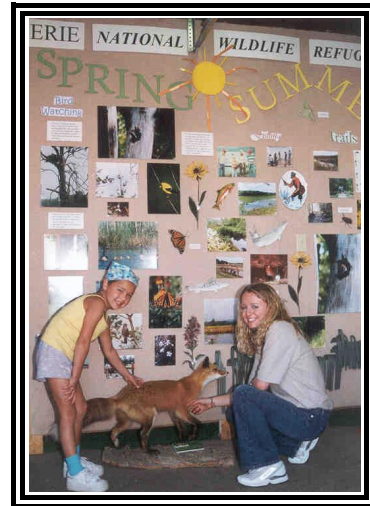
07/06/1997

Sarah J. Armstrong Clerk

GS-2

06/17/2001

12/31/2001



Temporary Appointment

Burnett A. Kessner, Bio-Tech

GS-4

04/08/2001

08/2001



Temporary Group Leader - YCC

Luke A. Randall

GS-5

06/10/2001

08/18/2001

Temporary YCC Enrollees

Sarah K. Cybulski
Benjamin A. Dempsey
Amanda L. Locke
Mathew L. McClellan
Brandy L. Yeager

Albert T. Durr

Volunteers

Robert D. Anderson
Tylene Berman
Scott Bolton
Pete Brown
Jean Stull Cunningham
Kathryn Enlow
Mike Grundy
Deidre A. Haas
Joan Howlett
Rick James
Susan James
Jennifer Kauffman
William Mantzell
Jack Paluh
Barbara Parlak

Dorrie Porter
Tim Poux
Gerry Putt
Luke Randall
Richard Raup
Gary L. Sliter
Damien J. Stover
Darren J. Stover
Ryan W. Stover
Thomas Terrill
Dorothy Thomas



Thomas P. Wentworth



Equipment and Facilities

Replacement vehicles acquired in 2001:

Dodge Grand Caravan replaced 1991 Ford
Aerostar

F
or
d
R
a
n
ge
r replaced 1991 Chevrolet
S-10





1998 Chevrolet S-10 fitted with a custom cap for the biologist



1990 L-9000 Ford dump truck converted to a tractor and a new Fontaine lowboy trailer was purchased



Facilities

The headquarters building received new carpet throughout all areas; draperies were replaced with vertical blinds; stained siding was replaced with vinyl; new roofing; and three large windows were replaced.



The garage at Quarters 7 on McFadden Road was updated with a larger steel overhead door to accommodate two vehicles.



The old iron bridge at the end of Muddy Creek
Holly Trail collapsed into Muddy Creek this year.



Concrete pads were installed at the Butler Building in the maintenance complex.



The former wood room at the headquarters was converted to a closed file storage area. Insulation and drywall were installed on the walls and ceiling.



Boulder Pond - Ducks Unlimited Project

Acting Refuge Manager Steve Kahl coordinated a Ducks Unlimited project for the water control structure replacement and dike repair at Boulder Pond. Ralph Hunter, Inc., was awarded the contract. There was a balance in the \$52,000 project fund, which Ducks Unlimited used to purchase a bat-wing mower for Erie NWR. It will be used in mowing the dikes, grassland management and invasive weed control.



FEEDBACK

This was a year of transition for Erie National Wildlife Refuge. Manager Tom Mountain retired on January 31 after 30 years of service. He had reported to Erie NWR in 1984.

On May 3, ORP Janet Marvin retired. She reported to Erie NWR in 1966 as a Clerk. After completing her degree in biology in 1984, she was appointed the first ORP at the station. Former manager Bill McCoy surprised Janet by attending her farewell dinner. He is now manager at Patoka River NWR, Indiana.



After nine months and several temporary manager details, Jeff Haas reported to duty in September as Refuge Manager. Jeff transferred from Hanford Reach National Monument/Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in the State of Washington.