

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

#35 - December 21, 2003

Annual Report of Activities

With the next annual meeting of the Blue Goose Alliance (BGA) approaching, President Noreen Clough released the Alliance's Annual Report of Activities. (The annual meeting will be held January 24, 2004, at the Howard Johnson Express Inn-South Padre Island Resort, South Padre Island Texas.)

President Clough noted that the Alliance's Working Group consists of volunteers in 18 states who dedicate their time and talents to advancing the mission of the Alliance - *Separate Agency Status for the National Wildlife Refuge System*. These folks continue to reflect the broad spectrum of people committed to the Refuge System - members of Friends and other Refuge support groups, retired Fish and Wildlife Service employees, and private individuals. Their collective contributions for Fiscal Year 2003 (ending September 30, 2003) are outlined below.

Congressional Outreach: Twenty-three Members of Congress and/or their key staffs were informed about the BGA, the Refuge System and the BGA mission through personal meetings as well as written communications. This continues to be an important element in the BGA strategy.

General Outreach: The BGA continued to "get the message out" through written communications, meetings, phone calls, and attending festivals and other events. Using donor contributions, the BGA was able to produce high-quality outreach items such as colorful brochures, donor cards, membership buttons, banners, and tabletop displays. Educational materials now include a Rationale Paper, Bullet Statement of Facts, and organizational charts comparing the current stature of the Refuge System within the FWS with a chart depicting separate agency status.

The BGA was prominent at several festivals, including the Refuge System's Centennial Celebration in Sebastian, FL, where 19 BGA members, including nine Board members, participated in events and had a booth in the festival area. Other events included a wide variety of either Refuge or wildlife celebrations from Alaska and Washington State to the Florida Everglades and points between.

Every Refuge Project Leader in the System received a letter and brochure from President Clough, updating them on the Alliance's activities and continued commitment to the Refuge System and separate agency status. Additionally, every Refuge Friends group received similar materials.

A draft article regarding the BGA has been submitted to the Republicans for Environmental Protection, at their request. The article should be published in *The Green Elephant* shortly. A similar draft article was submitted to a writer for *Field and Stream*, also by invitation. BGA educational materials were also made available to several other outdoors writers and newspaper columnists.

BGA Bulletins are our primary means of communication. Twelve Bulletins were published through the Yahoo group mailing, carrying various messages of interest to Bulletin subscribers. These went to National Wildlife Refuges in every state, Friends

Groups, and individuals. They remain posted on the BGA website at www.bluegoosealliance.org.

The Blue Goose Alliance president, board members, and volunteers talked with and provided educational materials to The Conservation Fund, the National Wildlife Refuge Association Board, Everglades Audubon, the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and potential BGA Advisory Board and Working Group members. The Executive Directors of the Georgia and Florida Wildlife Federations and the New Mexico Chapter of the Wildlife Society were briefed by BGA members on our mission, and provided with education materials.

The BGA secured a listing in the National Wildlife Federation Conservation Directory. This listing provides easier access to the BGA by many organizations and individuals who subscribe to that conservation directory.

Issue and Analysis: Although the BGA committed early on to keep our focus on separate agency status, two threats to the Refuge System prompted us into action - Management of the National Bison Range and Refuge Law Enforcement.

In a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, President Clough expressed BGA's serious concerns over the proposal to contract management functions to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. This process required a rigorous analysis of both the legal and administrative history of federal wildlife administration in the U.S. to support our position. The reply to the BGA from the FWS commended the BGA on this analysis and our understanding of the issues.

A similar, factually accurate letter was sent to the Secretary regarding the sweeping changes in Refuge Law Enforcement. This letter has been made available to key Members of Congress.

A BGA volunteer completed a detailed set of financial tables and comprehensive comparisons between the annual appropriations of the National Wildlife Refuge System and comparable appropriations for the National Park Service and National Forest Service to demonstrate the vast deficiency in the Refuge System. This analysis was eventually condensed and published as a BGA Bulletin. The analysis clearly shows why efforts to raise NWRS funding out of the doldrums must be redoubled.

Grants and Funding: Sixty two letters were written to charitable foundations giving basic facts about BGA work and inquiring about possible grants. From that group, 20 applications for grants were prepared and mailed. Five of these foundations asked for more detailed proposals, which were provided. Although no grants have been forthcoming primarily because the economic downturn, about 80 national foundations that have an interest in conservation have been educated through the literature and correspondence they have received.

The BGA has registered with GuideStar, a national database of non-profit organizations maintained at www.guidestar.com. GuideStar provides the capability for charitable groups and organizations to search for non-profit organizations with goals and activities matching their interests to make donations.

It goes without saying that the Blue Goose Alliance still relies totally on the generosity of its supporters. There is still time to make a tax deductible contribution for the

current tax year. Contributions should be mailed to: Blue Goose Alliance, 1080 Eagle Bluff Ct., Greensboro, GA 30642.