

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Four National Awards Bestowed National Wildlife Refuge System

The National Wildlife Refuge Association and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have honored three individuals and a Friends group with 2011 National Wildlife Refuge System Awards.



Clockwise from top left -- Friends of Chassahowitzka helped secure funding and support to purchase manatee habitat in Florida. Refuge Manager of the Year Kenneth Litzenberger, Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Volunteer of the Year Denis Mudderman installed a camera in an active beaver lodge at Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge, Minnesota. Refuge Employee of the Year David Mauser, Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuge, California.

The annual awards recognize refuge conservation professionals, volunteers and Friends groups who exemplify outstanding dedication and passion for wildlife conservation in advancement of the mission and purposes of the Refuge System.

Kenneth Litzenberger received the Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year Award.

Litzenberger, project leader at the Southeast Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex, was cited for his leadership and his creative approach to solving problems; for managing diverse and urgently threatened habitats to produce outstanding conservation results; and for deploying limited staff and critical resources at the most strategic places and times to accomplish mission critical work in response to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill and thus sparing refuge lands many impacts suffered elsewhere.

Dave Mauser received the Employee of the Year Award. A wildlife biologist at Klamath Basin Refuge Complex in southern Oregon, Mauser spearheaded innovative approaches to wetlands conservation that created more than 10,000 acres of new wetlands.

Denis Mudderman received the Volunteer of the Year Award for contributing almost 10,000 volunteer hours since 2005 at Tamarac Refuge in Minnesota and at Brazoria and San Bernard Refuges in Texas.

Mudderman has played an important role in designing, launching and maintaining the Friends of Tamarac's Web site and has brought a wide range of talents to all three refuges. At Texas Mid-Coast Refuge Complex, among other contributions, he facilitated the "Discovery Environmental Education Program" for elementary schoolchildren.

The Friends of Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge Complex on Florida's Gulf Coast were recognized with the Friends Group of the Year Award. The group was honored for collaborating with local, state and national partners during a multi-year effort to protect the important West Indian manatee habitat at Three Sisters Springs as part of Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge.

Source: USFWS National Wildlife Refuge System. *Friends Newswire*, May 19, 2011.  
<http://www.fws.gov/refuges/friends/newswire/>