

[From Spring 1997]

## **CNWR Volunteer Update**

Chincoteague Refuge volunteers were recognized at the annual Volunteer Awards Banquet in December which was sponsored by the Chincoteague Natural History Association in appreciation for all of the hours volunteers have contributed to the refuge. This event was well attended and several awards were given out.

Phil and Joan Moschitta were voted "Volunteers of the Year" and given a commemorative plaque that is displayed in the Visitor Center. Jack Keene was recognized for his dedication to the public use department, Dick and Nancy Roberts were recognized for the contribution to the biology program, John Battista and his beach fencing crew were recognized for their efforts, and Ted and Charlotte Thomas were recognized for the Outstanding Performance as new volunteers. Paul and Ann Smith were recognized nationally by the National Wildlife Refuge Association for their contributions to the refuge.

"Seasoned" volunteers received a Duck Stamp t-shirt with Chincoteague NWR embossed on the sleeve. The new volunteers received a volunteer pin and USFWS mug. Everyone enjoyed the evening.

On February 25, a volunteer organizational meeting was held. Volunteer Dick Roberts, who is coordinating this year's tree planting operation, explained that seedlings and saplings will be planted on March 22, with larger trees to be planted on April 19, in celebration of Earth Day. All volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate. These activities are part of the ongoing habitat restoration project to reforest areas of the refuge that have suffered damage due to the pine bark beetle infestation. The events will start at 9:00 am at sub-headquarters. Bring lunch, a beverage, sunscreen, bug-repellent, gloves, and a shovel.

Outdoor Recreation Planner Angie Tracy discussed the need for volunteers on May 10 and 11 to assist with the 3rd Annual International Migratory Bird Celebration. Volunteers are needed to assist with children's activities, staff the visitor center, and many other activities. Anyone interested in assisting can call Angie at (757) 336-6122.

Also during the meeting, volunteer John Battista led a discussion on the possibility of organizing the volunteers to be more involved with the establishment of new volunteer projects and in coordinating the accomplishment of those projects. A group called the "Chincoteague Refuge Friends" was formed and assignments made. Look for great things from this group in the future.