

[From Fall 2005]

Refuges to Merge

Change is a way of life at Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR). On a barrier island, change is constant and inevitable as the wind and water reshape the island. Staff has become accustomed to remaining fluid to the whims of nature and her modifications of the island.

However, Mother Nature is not the only force adjusting life at CNWR. As many of you are aware, former Refuge Manager John Schroer retired. Additionally, former Deputy Refuge Manager Tom Roster and Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner Angela Tracy have both left to take other positions with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Staff have adapted by temporarily shifting responsibilities and assignments in order to keep refuge operations running smoothly. Temporary supervisors were brought in from within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fill the management gap. However, like the beach after a storm, when times return to normal, the staffing chart will not look the same as before.

CNWR and the Eastern Shore of Virginia National Wildlife Refuge (ESVNWR) will be complexed together under the supervision of one project leader - a position which has not yet been filled.

The purpose of complexing two or more refuges together is to allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to accomplish its mission-related priorities while improving its cost-effectiveness. The Deputy Refuge Manager position (which has been announced) will directly supervise the visitor services division of CNWR as well as oversee CNWR's management, maintenance and law enforcement.

Susan Rice, the Refuge Manager of ESVNWR, will continue to oversee ESVNWR but will also include CNWR's biological program under her supervision. Until the project leader position is filled, Susan Rice will act as the Refuge Manger for both refuges.

Refuge staff would like to thank the CNHA for supporting us during this time of flux. We are confident that CNWR will remain one of the best in the system.