

Baca Named Interim Director



Sylvia V. Baca

Sylvia V. Baca has been named the Interim Director of the Bureau of Land Management by Secretary Babbitt. She succeeds **Michael P. Dombeck**, who headed BLM as Acting Director for two and one-half years before leaving the agency in January to become Chief of the U.S. Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture.

Baca had been serving as deputy assistant secretary for Land and Minerals Management—the Interior division that oversees the BLM, as well as the Minerals Management Service and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. She will return to that post after the confirmation of a permanent BLM Director.

“Sylvia Baca has worked closely with the BLM and with the states and communities served by the agency and has earned a reputation as a knowledgeable, skilled, and energetic manager,” Babbitt said. “We are very fortunate she has agreed to lend her talents and energy to the management of this important agency until a permanent director is sworn in.”

Prior to joining the Department two years ago, Baca was director of finance and management for the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico. She received a Bachelor of University Studies in 1981 and a Master of Public Administration in 1989 from the University of New Mexico.

“It has been a pleasure working with Mike Dombeck and having him as a member of the Interior team,” Secretary Babbitt said. “Over the past few years, Mike has helped shape the President’s forest plan, implemented a new management strategy to protect and restore salmon and steelhead habitats on public lands, and led the interdepartmental wildland fire policy review.”



Michael P. Dombeck

Assistant Secretary Frampton Leaving

George Frampton, Interior’s assistant secretary for parks and wildlife, has announced his resignation, effective on February 14. “I’ve been doing the same kind of issues for ten years without a vacation,” Frampton said. “I have two teenage sons, and I want to spend some time with them.”

Secretary Babbitt praised Frampton’s work, which included restoration of the Florida Everglades, conservation planning in coastal California, and using Exxon Valdez oil spill funds to buy fragile habitat around Prince William Sound in Alaska. “His knowledge and skill will be greatly missed here,” Babbitt said. Frampton, a trial lawyer active in environmental litigation, was president of the Wilderness Society before coming to Interior.

Intergovernmental’s Turner Resigns

Leslie Turner, counselor to the Secretary, director of Intergovernmental Affairs, and the former Assistant Secretary for Territorial and International Affairs resigned January 10. During her tenure as assistant secretary and as a member of the Department’s Reinventing Government Team, Turner successfully reorganized the Department’s management of territorial and international affairs, reducing costs and improving the delivery of these services. She is returning to the law firm of Aiken and Gump and will specialize in Pacific Rim issues.



Jim Siegel, above right, worked with other Interior instructors, Ugandan wildlife officials, and U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers, above left, as part of U.S. Government project to help Uganda rebuild its national park and game reserve system. Interior instructors Jeff Shryer (front row left) and Dave Vekasy (back row left) conducted park interpretive training. Siegel writes about the experience on pages 6-7.

Restoring Uganda’s Parks and Reserves

In the minds of most Americans, Uganda still evokes images of a tumultuous civil conflict in the 1970-80s. But **Jim Siegel** recalls a lush rolling landscape of farms, canopied rainforest, and savannas stretching to the horizon. He sees Lake Victoria, the Rift Valley, and the Rwenzori Mountains—habitat for some of the rarest and most beautiful wildlife in the world.

Before the civil war, Uganda was one of the premier wildlife tourist destinations in Africa, with such world-acclaimed protected areas as Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks. Queen Elizabeth National Park was once reputed to support the greatest population of large herbivores (mostly elephant, hippo, buffalo) of any place in the world. During the war years, those wildlife populations were decimated for food, commerce, and sport.

“Those chaotic times are part of the past,” said Siegel, who spent several weeks last fall training Ugandan wildlife wardens in techniques for monitoring biological resources. “Ten years of peace

and stability have led to an improved economy and better conservation of the country’s amazing wildlife resources,” said Siegel, a wildlife course leader at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia.

As part of its national conservation and sustainable development efforts, Uganda has begun rebuilding the national environmental agency—the Uganda Wildlife Authority—and restoring the national park and game reserve system.

“Uganda’s Rift Valley represents the great meeting of the East African savanna and the West African rainforest, one of the world’s foremost hotspots of biodiversity,” said Siegel, who hopes to return to Uganda to help conserve its unique natural heritage.

Siegel recounts his experiences, the role Interior is playing in Uganda’s rebuilding effort, and the challenges facing that nation’s wildlife preserves on pages 6-7.

Courage at Work

Harry Dalton, Hollywood’s version of a U.S. Geological Survey volcanologist, was investigating seismic episodes in a small Pacific Northwest town when he became alarmed by the evidence he found around a long dormant mountain—the kind of activity that precedes a catastrophic volcanic eruption.

Though his colleagues doubted his theories and questioned his evidence, Dalton enlisted the town mayor to help him convince his doubting supervisors and the unbelieving townspeople of the imminent danger.

Dante’s Peak explodes across the screen, as the movie ads proclaim, in February, starring **Pierce Brosnan** as the heroic Interior employee who saves hundreds of lives by his courageous action. While the film is a special effects fiction, it is another indication that Hollywood and the national media have tapped a rich vein at Interior—the physical dangers many employees face in carrying out their everyday jobs and the need for great gobs of courage to face the expected and unexpected risks.

Last year, a made-for-TV movie featured fictional smokejumpers, but the dangers of that job are no



fiction to thousands of Interior wildland firefighters who risked life and limb last summer and fall trying to save people’s homes and property as well as the nation’s natural resources during the largest wildfire season in 30 years. The all-too-real dangers faced by Bureau of Land Management rangers, wildlife biologists, park rangers and police, and other Interior law officers also have made national headlines over the past few years.

Much of the work Interior does involves danger from natural and human sources. And Interior employees often put themselves in harm’s way to help others, as part of their jobs and sometimes even when they are not on the job. They disregard their personal safety and face grave risks to help co-workers, complete strangers, and the people who visit the nation’s parks, refuges, and recreation areas. Though it may not be listed in the job description, *Courage at Work* is an indispensable asset for many Interior employees.

At a December 9 convocation, Secretary Babbitt honored Interior employees for their courageous and heroic actions and their distinguished service to the Department and the nation.

Valor and Excellence: The stories behind the 1996 Valor and Distinguished Service Awards are told on page 4.

Sailing To San Juan

National Park Service interpreters like to get into their work—to live the history they relate to visitors. So when interpreters at the San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth in the Caribbean, learned that a replica of an early American sailing ship was coming to visit, a serendipitous exchange took shape.

“It began with a fortuitous conversation with Ranger-Historian **Scott Sheads** of Fort McHenry National Monument in Maryland,” recalled **Deborah Rehn**, an architect at the San Juan Site. “*The Pride of Baltimore II*, was coming to port in San Juan harbor to rest and rejuvenate the crew before the last home stretch of their European tour,” Rehn said. The 1812 Baltimore Clipper is the State of Maryland’s goodwill ambassador to the world.

Rehn informed **Mark Johnson**, the chief of interpretation at San Juan. Johnson thought that a sail on the ship would be an excellent way for his staff to learn first hand about the difficulties of navigating a sailing vessel in and out of San Juan harbor. He also realized that he had been Sheads’ instructor in an NPS Historic Weapons & Black Powder Officer Training program in 1990.

With the support of San Juan Superintendent **Ping Crawford**

and an invitation from the *Pride’s* captain, **Jan Miles**, Johnson and his group of interpreters and park guides set off for an afternoon sail with the crew of the clipper. After Captain Miles explained historic sailing ship and navigational terms, Ranger Sheads talked about the construction of the ship, and Chief Johnson reviewed the primary harbor battles and pirate activities of the period in which this type of vessel would have participated.

Finally, with the trade winds blowing, the group experienced first hand the wind shadow of El Morro Castle—a 16th century Spanish fort guarding the entrance to the bay—on departing and entering the harbor. The team learned how much effort is required to manually raise and lower sails, and the complexities of steering this type of ship in a narrow channel. The “crew” also experienced the necessity of teamwork in accomplishing a challenge.

San Juan National Historic Site then hosted a torchlight

tour of El Morro, opening many closed areas of the fort for the captain, his crew, and the families of park staff. The tour included a living history presentation by the San Juan “crew” of interpreters that brought the fort to life. The captain and crew of the *Pride* were presented a plaque commemorating this historic exchange.

The project offered mutual enrichment. Tentative arrangements have been made for future exchanges. This was the fourth visit of the *Pride* to Puerto Rico since the vessel was launched in 1988. For a copy of Ranger Scott’s report from the *Pride of Baltimore II*, check out the *Pride of Baltimore II* World Wide Web homepage at <http://www.4impact.com/pride>

Submitted by **Deborah Rehn**, an architect at San Juan National Historic Site.



Lucky San Juaneros are ready to help sail the *Pride of Baltimore II*. From left, in front row, Joel Acevedo, Deborah Rehn, Rosanna Weltzin, Milagros Alvino, Laura Roman; Back row, Mark Johnson, Jose L. Duran, Jorge Acevedo, John Cancel, David Bocanegra, and Carlos Carrasquillo. Above, the *Pride* at sea with all sails flying. Photos by Scott Sheads.

Hardwiring History

Paul Winegar, Southeast Field Area

Bringing a massive labyrinth of 400-year old fortifications into the computer age was no small task. Doing it without damaging the site’s historical features was even harder, but helped to preserve a premier example of colonial Spanish architecture.

Fort San Cristobal and El Morro Castle at San Juan National Historic Site are some of the oldest cultural resources in the National Park System. The fort—*El Fuerte de San Cristobal*—was begun by the Spanish in 1625. It lies at the east end of the fortifications which protected Old San Juan and San Juan Bay on Puerto Rico’s northeast coast. *Castillo de San Felipe del Morro* (El Morro), begun in 1540, stands guard west of the city at the entrance to the bay. The Historic Site also has 14 million square feet of City Walls surrounding the original city and numerous other structures.

The site’s managers decided that networking the park’s 22 personal computers was the best way to improve communication in the park, the Caribbean area, and with National Park Service support groups thousands of miles away. A team of NPS professionals was called in and successfully installed the first of its kind and most up-to-date system in the southeast field area. **Mark Hardgrove**, Assistant Superintendent at San Juan, spearheaded the effort to reduce paperwork, improve communications between park management and staff, and optimize the use of the existing computers.

NPS offices are located throughout the park, literally from one end of Old San Juan to the other, a distance of about a mile. The park management headquarters is at Fort San Cristobal and the offices are housed in historic officer’s quarters and casemates. The administration offices (personnel, purchasing, and cultural resources) are in a historic two-story Spanish colonial building located outside the fort.

Hardwiring the computers between the two locations was a major challenge. The management

offices in the fort lie on top of five historic solid masonry cisterns, while the administration offices outside are down the hill, below the cisterns. The vaulted stone and brick tanks, built in 1774, are filled by rain runoff from the plaza above. Each can hold 2,400 gallons of water. Two are still in use for emergency water shortages.

Facility Manager **Angel Diaz**, who directed the wiring of the system, had to take into account any effect it might have on the historic fabric of the structures and avoid damaging these cultural resources. The solution was to run cables along the wall through one of the 57-foot long cisterns and into existing conduits to the offices in the fort and the administration building outside.

First, wires were pulled in each of the two locations and run through existing conduits to telephone outlet boxes in each office. Next, NPS maintenance workers **Richard Negron** and **Carlos Quintana** donned life vests and flippers and entered the cisterns. They worked from a plywood platform mounted on a truck tire inner tube, a new form of floating scaffolding! Their on-the-job maintenance experience and recreational snorkeling skills came in handy. **Henry Lopez**, the maintenance supervisor, monitored their safety.

After the wiring was completed, the wall connections were installed by a local computer technician. **Dawn Bosh** of Everglades National Park and **Wayne Martorana** of the Gulf Coast System Support Office then arrived on-site to complete the networking process.



Aerial view of fortress San Felipe del Morro, San Juan National Historic Site.

At the other end of the Historic Site, park maintenance offices located in *El Polverin*, the powder magazine on the grounds of El Morro, required another solution. Because of the distance between El Morro and the office complexes at Fort San Cristobal, computers in the park maintenance division use a remote setting and are tied to the network through the public telephone system.

The park now has 22 IBM compatible computers which can communicate directly through cc:mail without the need for dedicated phone lines. The server software is Microsoft Windows NT, the workstations operate on Windows 95 and 3.1.1 for Workgroups completes the operating system.

Elba Vega, the system administrator, credits Mark Hardgrove and the Dell and Microsoft Technical Assistance people for her knowledge. The project’s final stage will train all staff to use the system’s full capabilities. DOI Net will soon provide the park immediate access to everything from purchasing to property to personnel.

Paul Winegar is the Public Affairs Officer for the NPS, Southeast Field Area in Atlanta, Georgia.

Around the Department



...are presented to Interior employees who have demonstrated unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger. The act of heroism is not required to be related to official duties or to have occurred at the official duty station. Recipients receive the everlasting gratitude of the people they save and the grateful thanks of the nation they serve, as well as a citation signed by the Secretary and an engraved gold medal.

Matthew A. Lysakowski and David W. Norenberg, Sr. The Bureau of Reclamation officers faced escalating danger from a severely depressed man wielding a 14-inch carving knife and threatening to commit suicide by jumping from the top of Hoover Dam. Lysakowski and Norenberg talked the man out of jumping, disarmed him, and resolved the situation without resorting to deadly force. The two-hour confrontation took place October 10, 1996 on a busy highway that spans the top of the dam. The threatening situation stopped traffic and endangered motorists and passersby.

James W. Hendley II, U.S. Geological Survey, saved a woman at Point Reyes National Seashore, when she panicked while climbing the sheer face of a cliff. Hendley positioned himself on the near vertical rock face above the woman, directed her husband and another man to anchor his legs, and placed himself at significant risk of falling more than 50 feet onto sharp rocks below by allowing the woman to grip and hold his arm while Hendley directed her to hand and foot holds that enabled her to climb off the precipice.

Gary E. Peeples, Jr., Fish and Wildlife Service, saved a family caught in a riptide at Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge on June 28, 1995. Peeples, a student intern, entered the dangerous waters without hesitation and swam to a father who was attempting to keep his two daughters above waters as they were swept out to sea.

Peeples brought one daughter to shore, while the father assisted with the rescue of the other. Peeples swam back out to the mother, who had been carried further out to sea, and brought her to safety. He then immediately returned to his duties at the Visitor Center. The father, David Ellison, reported the rescues, saying the family might have perished without Peeples' unhesitating and unselfish acts of bravery.

James L. Detterline, National Park Service, saved the lives of two visitors who had fallen into the Roaring River at Rocky Mountain National Park on August 12, 1995. Ranger Detterline entered the river to stabilize the two adults while rescue equipment was being set up. The victims had been in the frigid waters for more than 30 minutes and were barely clinging to a rock about 15 feet above the lip of 75-foot high Horseshoe Falls.

Detterline slipped twice trying to reach the couple. On his third attempt, the victims—unable to hold on any longer—unexpectedly lunged at Detterline who exhibited tremendous strength and courage by holding onto them long enough for rangers on the shore to pull them to safety.

Richard Scott Evans, National Park Service,



Interior's Valor Award recipients for 1996 gather for a group photograph after the presentations by Secretary Babbitt. The employees were recognized for their courage at the Department's 58th Honor Awards Convocation on December 9 in the auditorium of the Main Interior Building. Photo by Tami Heilemann, ISC

rescued three individuals on Lake Namakan at Voyagers National Park. The snowmobilers had been stranded overnight without food or shelter in minus 25-degree weather when Pilot Evans spotted them from the air. Surface conditions on the lake were rough with windblown hammocks and patches of fresh snow.

Evans made several touch-and-go landings to smooth out the hummocks and test the surface of the lake to ensure that the plane would not bog down in the slush. He then landed and took off three times carrying the victims to safety one by one.

Michael Fellner, National Park Service, rescued two people in imminent danger of drowning off of Riis Park at Gateway National Recreation Area. Lieutenant Feller, of the Park Police, swam out to the victims with a life saving ring, first helped a man reach the safety of nearby buoys, then swam to a woman who was in a state of panic, reassured her in her native Spanish, and brought her to shore with the lifesaving ring.

Jack Finley, National Park Service, helped to save two co-workers following the crash of a fully-fueled CH-47 helicopter that had been fighting the Blackwell Fire near McCall, Idaho, on

September 23, 1994. Finley, who was the Park Service observer/ground liaison officer on the helicopter, remained aboard the burning aircraft to help put out two fires. He then helped a crew chief who had been injured in the crash to get out of the helicopter, warned people on the ground away from the wreckage, and reentered the smoldering fuselage to locate the second crew chief.

Randall K. Flanery, National Park Service, saved the life of a 12-year old boy who had been swept into the freezing Queets River in Olympic National Park. Seeing the accident, Ranger Flannery immediately entered the river—in full uniform—swam 35 yards downstream in the swiftly flowing, snow melt-swollen river, and found the boy submerged in a deep pool at the confluence of the Queets and Sam Rivers. Flannery pulled the boy's head out of the water, calmed the scared, disoriented, and combative victim, and pulled him to safety.

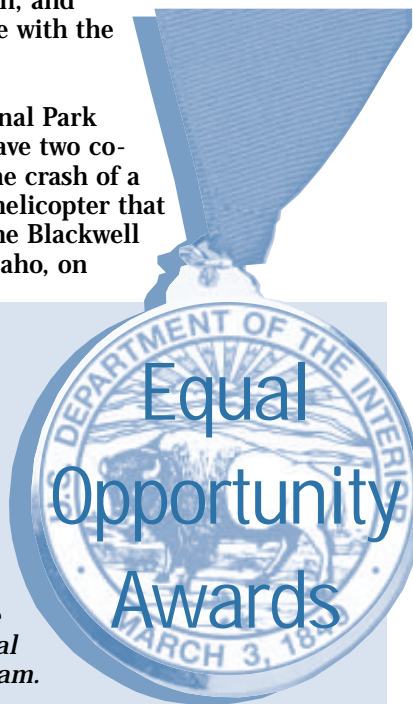
Richard P. Martin, National Park Service, recovered the driver of a submerged vehicle, which had run off a road and plunged into a rain-swollen creek outside Chickasaw National Recreation Area on May 26, 1994. Before divers and rescue equipment arrived at the accident scene, Martin, with a rope tied around his waist, swam to the middle of the creek through a swift current and repeatedly dove 15-feet to the vehicle until he had freed the victim.

Daniel R. Mason, National Park Service, single-handedly convinced a suicidal man with two handguns to surrender on January 8, 1996, at Olympic National Park's Lake Crescent. The intoxicated and severely depressed individual threatened suicide and waved a cocked .44 caliber pistol several times during a 30-minute face-to-face confrontation with Ranger Mason, who not only disarmed the man but also convinced him to voluntarily surrender.

Theodore D. Ondler, James W. Pilgrim, Bob B. Quarles, Cameron S. Shaw, Benita S. Smith, and Val K. Urban, all Fish and Wildlife Service employees, rescued numerous residents of the Florida Gulf Coast during a major winter storm that struck the area March 13, 1993. Hurricane force winds and an 8-foot storm surge on a high tide caused rapid flooding that trapped thousands of these residents, many of them elderly retirees and many with medical conditions that could have deteriorated and proven fatal had they not been rescued.

Acting independently without the benefit of a central command post, and at great personal risk, these employees faced hurricane force winds, intense wave action, freezing temperatures, wind and water tossed debris, downed electrical lines, and broken gas lines to reach the flood victims in boats and bring them to safety. All of the employees risked capsizing, collisions, and drowning, as well as electrocution and explosions in performing these life-saving operations.

... recognize individuals, supervisors, managers, and organizations demonstrating exemplary service and commitment in strengthening and promoting the Department's Equal Opportunity Program.



Lori Windle, of the Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation Enforcement, received the Employee Achievement Award.

Horace Clark, of the Office of the Solicitor, received the award for Long-Term Achievement.

F. Eugene Hester, of the National Biological Service (now the USGS Biological Resources Division), was honored with the Management Achievement Award.

The Wyoming State Office, of the Bureau of Land Management, received the award for Organizational Achievement.

And the **Departmental Special Emphasis Observance Committee** received the Special Emphasis Achievement Award.

Distinguished Service Awards



Interior employees who were honored with the Distinguished Service Award for 1996 gathered for a group photograph after the presentations by Secretary Babbitt. The December 9 ceremony at the Main Interior Building was the Department's 58th Honor Awards Convocation. Photo by Tami Heilemann, ISC



...are the highest honorary recognition employees can receive in the Department of the Interior. It is granted for outstanding contribution to science, outstanding skill or ability in the performance of duty, outstanding contributions made during an eminent career in the Department, or any other exceptional contribution to public service. Recipients receive a certificate and citation signed by the Secretary along with an engraved gold Distinguished Service Award medal and gold lapel pin. The 1996 recipients were:

- John H. Farrell, Office of the Secretary
- Albert V. Witham, Office of the Solicitor
- Eleanor R. Schwartz, Bureau of Land Management
- Robert E. Brown, Minerals Management Service
- Gerald R. Daniels, Minerals Management Service
- James R. Detlefs, Minerals Management Service
- H. Erich Groess, Minerals Management Service
- James W. Shaw, Minerals Management Service
- Larry L. Amos, U.S. Geological Survey
- Mark G. Bonilla, U.S. Geological Survey
- W. L. Budd, U.S. Geological Survey
- F. Cannon, U.S. Geological Survey
- James S. Dutro, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey
- John Flores, U.S. Geological Survey
- Robert J. Gant, U.S. Geological Survey
- Keith A. Kvenvolden, U.S. Geological Survey

- Richard A. MacDonald, U.S. Geological Survey
- Peggy K. McCafferty, U.S. Geological Survey
- Robert H. Meade, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey
- Alan M. Mikuni, U.S. Geological Survey
- Randle W. Olsen, U.S. Geological Survey

- Robert A. Page, U.S. Geological Survey
- William W. Patton, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey
- L. Niel Plummer, U.S. Geological Survey
- Joseph S. Rosenshein, U.S. Geological Survey
- Laurence A. Soderblom, U.S. Geological Survey
- Linda D. Stanley, U.S. Geological Survey
- John Vecchioli, U.S. Geological Survey
- Richard S. Williams, Jr., U.S. Geological Survey
- Bernard J. Scheiner, Bureau of Mines
- Dale F. Imlay, Bureau of Reclamation
- John W. Keys III, Bureau of Reclamation
- Claude F. Lard, Fish and Wildlife Service
- Joseph S. Marler, Fish and Wildlife Service
- Richard N. Smith, Fish and Wildlife Service
- Milton Friend, National Biological Service
- F. Eugene Hester, National Biological Service
- Rowland T. Bowers, National Park Service
- John H. Davis, National Park Service
- Henry E. Drews, National Park Service
- William H. Ehorn, National Park Service
- Thomas C. Gray, Jr., National Park Service
- Ronald M. Greenberg, National Park Service
- Robert C. Milne, National Park Service
- John G. Parsons, National Park Service
- Richard E. Powers, National Park Service
- Michael D. Shields, National Park Service

These dedicated public servants are the pillars of their services, our department, and of the federal government. They inspire us to take pride in our work and challenge us to match the high standards of their achievements.
Secretary Babbitt



...awards are granted to individuals or groups not employed by the Department but who have performed outstanding and direct service to Interior and improved the effectiveness of Departmental missions. The awards are the highest honor that can be bestowed on a private citizen or group by the Secretary.

Orme Lewis, Jr., Sponsored by the Bureau of Mines, received the Conservation Award for his commitment to resource conservation, the development of environmentally sound technology, and the support of advanced mineral-related education through Interior's Mineral Institute Program, which he headed for more than ten years.

John Hollingsworth, sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service, was honored with the Conservation Service Award for his unparalleled and exemplary photography of wildlife and their natural habitat. His work fostered an international appreciation of the treasures of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Vin T. Sparano, sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service, received the Conservation Service Award for his outstanding career and

contributions spanning 35 years as a writer and editor with Outdoor Life magazine. His work conveyed an abiding respect for and adherence to codes of ethics and conduct that surpassed the mere letter of game laws.

Roger E. Preuss, sponsored by the Fish and Wildlife Service, received the Public Service Award for his lifetime work in conservation art and education and his exceptional contributions to wildlife and habitat conservation. Over five decades he donated wildlife art that generated more than \$4.5 million for wildlife habitat preservation and other basic conservation efforts and co-founded numerous wildlife conservation groups. His many honors include being selected National Wildlife Artist of the Year (1964), Dear of Wildlife Artists, and U.S. Bicentennial Wildlife Artist.

DIVERSITY AWARDS

... honor Interior employees or groups demonstrating exemplary service or significant contributions to the Department's efforts to substantially increase diversity at all levels, including equal opportunity and affirmative employment initiatives.

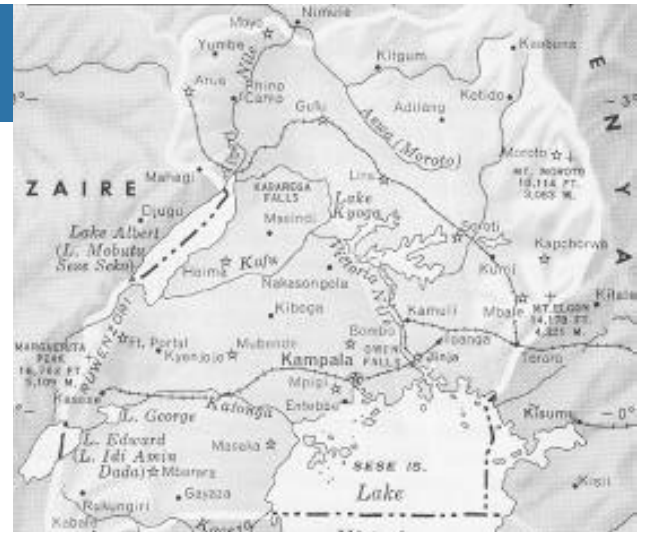
Efraim Escalante, Bureau of Reclamation, received the Management Achievement Award.

The Special Emphasis Committee, National Interagency Fire Center, Bureau of Land Management, received the Special Emphasis Award.

The Section 504 Coordination Team of Region 5, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, received the Accessibility/Employment of Persons with Disabilities Award.

International Initiatives

Interior in Uganda: A Partnership for Biodiversity



As the visitor wandered off the trail during a tour of the wildlife preserve, the Ugandan park guide approached the stray, conjured up a genuinely concerned look, and asked, "Excuse me, sir, but have you ever been bitten by a poisonous snake?"

The visitor scurried back to the trail and remained close to the group for the rest of the tour. The guide's novel approach worked without admonishing the wayward visitor as had been done in the past, sometimes causing embarrassment and wounded pride.

The new technique is a small example of the success of a training program conducted by Interior employees on behalf of the U.S. Government. At the request of Uganda, the U.S. Agency for International Development is funding the Department to assist the Uganda Wildlife Authority in training its park and game reserve employees.

The training focuses on improving their ability to interpret wildlife resources and conduct biological inventories of Uganda's rich wildlife, plant, and forest resources. Interior's participation in the international conservation project is funded under a Partnership for Biodiversity agreement that Assistant Secretary **Bonnie Cohen** signed with the Agency for International Development in 1995.

The work is carried out under the leadership of the Department's Office of International Affairs and is often done in cooperation with the U.S. Peace Corps. Last year, four Interior employees trained 28 Ugandans working in protected areas and 15 of their Peace Corps Volunteer counterparts during four 2-week sessions.

Storytelling in the Service of Wildlife

David Vekasy, a supervisory park ranger at San Antonio Mission National Historic Park in Texas, led the interpretative skills training program, conducted last spring. Vekasy was assisted by **Jeff Shryer**, the Uganda project leader with the Partnership for Biodiversity. Shryer



Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park, which once had the greatest population of large herbivores (elephants, buffaloes, hippos) in the world, has a wealth of lush scenery, such as Lake Nyamusingiri, above. At left, Dave Vekasy, a supervisory park ranger at San Antonio Mission National Historic Park in Texas, works with Ugandan trainees during an interpretive skills class.

Uganda's Parks and Wildlife—The Beauty and the Challenge

Jim Siegel

The most striking thing about Uganda is how green it is. Lush farms of bananas, corn, potatoes, tea, and coffee dot the rolling landscape. Wildland is covered with multi-canopied moist forest or dryer savanna. As you travel from Kampala, the capital, toward the west,

Jim Siegel, FWS, enjoying the shade of a canopied forest in Queen Elizabeth National Park, hopes he'll have further opportunities to contribute to the conservation of Uganda's unique natural heritage.



you pass the northern shore of enormous Lake Victoria. About 25 percent of the country is covered by lakes and various types of wetlands.

Queen Elizabeth National Park, our training site, is 200,000 hectares of bush-grassland and forest leading to the edge of the Rift Valley's Lake Edward. The famous Rwenzori Mountains loom off to the northwest. The park is home to thousands of Uganda kob, Defassa waterbuck, bushbuck, topi, Cape buffalo, warthog, hippo, elephant, and their predators such as spotted hyena, leopard, and lion.

The park hub of the Mweya consists of tourist facilities, park headquarters, and employee housing, all on a narrow peninsula jutting into Lake Edward. Indoor sessions for both training courses were held in a small classroom of the Institute of Ecology.

One of the most consistently amusing things about Mweya was that family groups of warthogs would graze outside the buildings, oblivious to people walking by. Ornamental flowering trees and shrubs were alive with various weaverbirds, bulbuls, and sunbirds.

Unlike most of the parks in the United States, Ugandan national parks and game reserves may contain rural communities, generally small villages that fish in park lakes and rivers. Lake Edward bordering Queen Elizabeth National Park supports an important commercial tilapia industry.



From left, Peace Corps Volunteer Chris Scypinski and Kyambadde, of the Uganda Institute of Ecology, review site plans with Interior's Lou Hagener (a BLM ecosystem specialist) as warthogs wander through the yard.



At left, Interior instructors show trainees how to set up a quadrat to measure vegetation cover on a savanna. At right, Henry Busulwa, a fishery biologist with the Uganda Institute of Ecology, shows trainees how to measure tilapia and lungfish as part of the wildlife monitoring course.



is a wildlife biologist with the Bureau of Land Management's Kemerer Resource Area in Wyoming.

The interpretative training focused on applying four key principles: how to relate to visitors' experiences, provoking thought, revealing information, and using artistic approaches, such as storytelling, to give visitors rewarding and memorable nature talks. After initial classroom instruction, trainees practiced their presentations outdoors for their international visitor audience.

Trainees set minimum performance standards for their nature talks and helped to develop a standardized visitor questionnaire to evaluate tourist satisfaction with services in the protected areas, including presentations by nature guides. The questionnaire has been adopted by the Uganda Wildlife Authority for use in all of that nation's protected areas.

Shryer returned to Uganda in October to evaluate how well the students have applied the interpretative skills training at their work sites. He was accompanied by the director of the Peace Corps for Uganda and the assistant director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

The trainees showed excellent progress in improving their interpretative presentations, Shryer reported. Three of them are teaching other park staff how to give nature talks. Safari tour operators now request some of the Ugandan trainees by name to give presentations to tour groups.

Monitoring a Hotspot of Biodiversity

Jim Siegel and **Lou Hagner** taught the biological inventory and monitoring course, held in the fall. Siegel is a wildlife course leader with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Conservation Training Center in West Virginia. Hagner is an ecosystem specialist with the Bureau of Land Management's Havre Resource Area in Montana.

People living near protected areas also have some legal access to harvest polewood, reeds, bamboo, and medicinal plants for family use. Subsistence hunting and trapping, although illegal, are not uncommon in the parks and reserves, with wildlife often captured using wire-snares.

Much of the fieldwork for our biological inventorying course was conducted in nearby park grassland and forest. Participants were familiarized with a number of the common plant, wildlife, and fish species and the appropriate techniques to survey them.

The bird life at Queen Elizabeth was incredible, with the class easily observing about 100 of the area's 545 species. Participants also took a boat trip along the Kazinga Channel of Lake Edward to survey large mammals and aquatic birds and visited a fishing village to estimate the harvest of tilapia, catfish, and other species.

The class also visited a prominent Uganda kob lekking ground, a large closely-cropped plain where the strongest male antelope set up very small territories within a display and fighting arena. Groups of female kob came to the lek to choose the

Henry Busulwa, a fisheries biologist at the Uganda Institute of Ecology, assisted Siegel and Hagner. All the Interior trainers had worked as Peace Corps park management volunteers in Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The participants in the course were from all the protected areas of western Uganda, where the East African savanna meets the West African rainforest—considered one of the world's foremost hotspots of biodiversity. Most were tourism wardens, whose responsibilities included supervising ranger staff as well as the development of park roads and visitor facilities.

Five of the participants had the enviable position of working in the two mountain gorilla parks in the southwest part of the country. A few were community conservation wardens assigned to help villages inside and bordering the protected areas to use natural resources such as fish, plants, and forest products in a way that would sustain those resources. A few participants were law enforcement wardens, supervising anti-poaching rangers.

The course concentrated on basic biological survey skills including the use of a topographic map and compass, plot and transect techniques for vegetation and wildlife, and methods of estimating fish harvests.

The trainees ranked their areas' top inventory and monitoring issues, giving the highest priorities to wildlife populations and their movements, efforts to curb poaching, the effects of wildfire, the succession of savanna vegetation, the impacts of tourism, and the sustainable use of park resources. Each team of trainees also wrote an inventory action plan for their protected area.

most dominant males for mating, ignoring big groups of younger bachelor males.

While practicing forest inventory techniques, the class saw large colorful birds like turacos and hornbills and four species of primate including the striking black-and-white colobus monkey.

The most challenging aspect of the course was training an audience with a varied range of experience. A few of the wardens were trained conservation professionals with fairly extensive experience in park management, while others were just starting their careers.

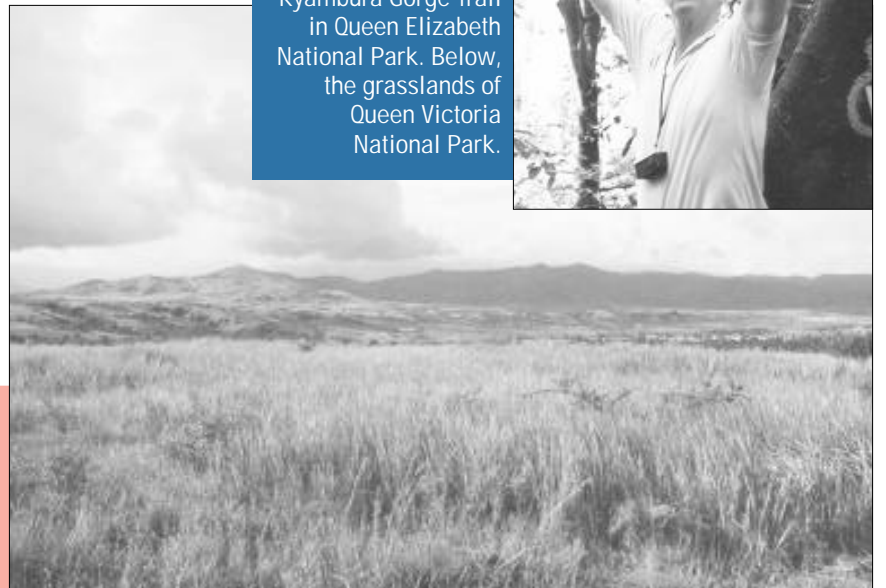
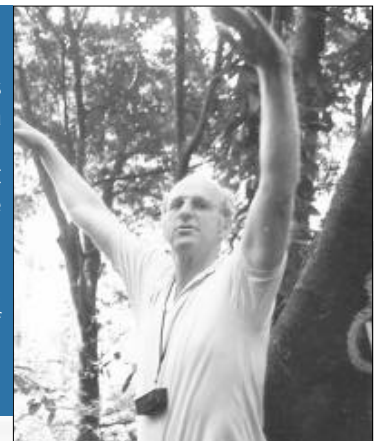
The key was to help trainees improve their skills and gain practice in applying those monitoring techniques to relevant conservation issues, whatever their background.

The process of using inventory and monitoring approaches to improve land management is one of the most neglected parts of many conservation programs. The inventory site plans that the trainees developed during the course will help them focus

All trainees were expected to train their home staff in the newly acquired skills. Each team was given key monitoring equipment to take back to their parks and preserves, including binoculars, field guides, compasses, tape measures, vegetation plot frames, mapping tools, notebooks, and clipboards.

Additional photos, story, page 2.

Lou Hagner, at right, an ecosystem specialist at BLM's Havre Resource Area in Montana, describes how to measure forest canopy on the Kyambura Gorge Trail in Queen Elizabeth National Park. Below, the grasslands of Queen Victoria National Park.



their new surveying skills on the most urgent management problems facing their protected areas.

Jeff Shryer and other members of the country team will return to Uganda in 1997 to evaluate how the inventory and monitoring training has been applied in helping to revitalize management in the country's parks and reserves. The team also will give more focused monitoring training and will be able to trouble shoot the most pressing inventorying and monitoring problems.