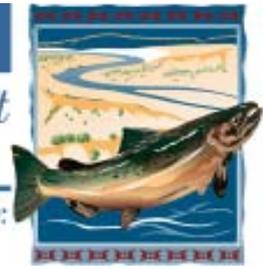


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Hanford Reach National Monument
Saddle Mountain National Wildlife Refuge
... protecting the last of the free-flowing Columbia River.



August 5, 2004 Hanford Reach NM and McNary NWR Combine Efforts to Protect Columbia River Islands

Staff members at Hanford Reach National Monument and McNary National Wildlife Refuge pooled resources recently in an effort to protect waterfowl and shorebird resting, feeding and nesting habitat on five islands in the McNary National Wildlife Refuge. Two of the islands are within the Hanford Reach National Monument and one of the remaining three is within the city limits of Richland. The islands first generated local attention with a 1993 ruling from a federal lawsuit in which the Audubon Society sought to protect wildlife from adverse impacts created by recreational boaters. The island beaches have been a popular location for picnicking, partying and camping, uses not compatible with protection under the National Wildlife System. The ruling mandated that the Service complete the compatibility determination process prior to allowing any recreational use on the islands. Currently, the only approved use is waterfowl hunting during seasons established by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.



Ten years later, the ruling had become virtually lost to the history books, until local residents voiced concern over an increase in disturbance to wildlife and destruction of nesting habitat. USFWS staff and Youth



Conservation Corp crew members from Hanford and McNary organized a cooperative effort to locate and place “area closed” signing at the beaches and along the shorelines. Assisted by archeologists and Wanapum tribal members documenting section 106 NEPA compliance, over 50 signs were installed approximately every quarter mile, informing users of refuge status and area restrictions. It is hoped this effort will benefit the wildlife populations that use the island habitat and assist law enforcement officers in generating compliance from recreationists that use the Hanford Reach.