

*NWF's groundbreaking education programs reach and inspire people at every age, at every stage of life and from every background to protect and restore the natural world around them. This year we celebrated the 30th anniversary of our Backyard Wildlife Habitat program, added hundreds of new Schoolyard Habitats sites across the country, expanded our Wildlife University™ distance-learning program and reached millions of people through our eNature.com website as we continued to educate, inspire and assist people to care for wildlife and wild places.*

## **30th Anniversary of Our Backyard Wildlife Habitat Program**

*“When people visit the nation’s capital, tour the monuments, see the White House and view democracy at work, they’re reminded of the power each of us has to make a lasting contribution to our world. Bartholdi Park will now show citizens how to make this kind of contribution—one that promotes a healthy environment for both people and wildlife—right in their own backyards.”*

**Holly Shimizu,**  
Executive Director of the  
U.S. Botanic Garden

In 1973, NWF’s *National Wildlife*® magazine published an article encouraging people to landscape and garden in a more sustainable, natural way. Response to the article was so overwhelming that we began what has become one of our best known programs, the Backyard Wildlife Habitat program.

Thirty years later, we are proud to celebrate the 36,000 sites that are now certified wildlife habitats, and the program continues to build every year. In just the last year alone, we added more than 3,500 new certified backyard habitats to our roster. And the popularity of the program keeps growing as we expand our efforts to encourage participation by communities everywhere.

**A National Backyard Wildlife Habitat** ~ During the 30th anniversary celebration of our Backyard Wildlife Habitat program, NWF certified the U.S. Botanic Garden’s Bartholdi Park as the nation’s 35,000th certified habitat. The Bartholdi Park site is exposing millions to NWF’s Backyard Wildlife Habitat program. Located next to the Mall in Washington, D.C., the park is filled with a multitude of North American native plants and the countless birds and butterflies they attract. The millions of visitors who come to the park each year view interpretive signs that provide information on sustainable gardening and also highlight the critical features of a wildlife habitat—food, water, shelter and places to raise young. The visitors may obtain information on how to certify their own yard with NWF.



# Living Classrooms, Lifelong Stewardship

More and more teachers are finding that there is no better way to teach their students than taking them out of the classroom and into nature. Math, science and even language arts are more easily learned when a youngster can touch and see the natural world.

## Workday for Wildlife

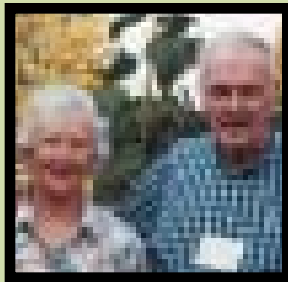
With a grant from the Alcoa Foundation, NWF teamed up with Alcoa employees, community leaders, Subaru of America, Inc., teachers, students and other members of the Lafayette, Indiana community in a Workday for Wildlife. The effort transformed a part of Purdue University's grounds into a demonstration Backyard Wildlife Habitat site. Today, the habitat is used by the entire town to connect with nature and learn about sustainable gardening. The Workday for Wildlife was accepted as a USA Initiative of the Points of Light Foundation project honoring the victims of September 11th.

**A Great Year** ~ NWF's Schoolyard Habitats program is on the rise in popularity, and in 2003, we celebrated a banner year. Nearly 400 new schoolyard habitats across the nation were certified. The total number of official schoolyard habitats has hit 1,976 since the program's start in 1996.

Based on the original idea of the Backyard Wildlife Habitat initiative, and thanks to the generous support of the Wege Foundation, our schoolyard program teaches schoolchildren and educators how to create thriving wildlife habitats in their own schoolyards. NWF offers a host of resources for students and teachers, including online materials, free activity guides and educator workshops on topics ranging from endangered species to the Northern Forests.

In 2003, NWF provided fifty \$250 mini-grants to schools across the country as part of its Wild Seed Fund. The program gives schools the financial resources needed to begin a Schoolyard Habitats site.

**Schoolyard Habitats Arrive in Mexico** ~ Working with partners across Mexico, NWF is helping citizens, educators and students protect their country's precious wildlife through our Alianza para la Vida Silvestre (Partnership for Wildlife) program. Thanks to a grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, this year NWF trained more



## Dirck and Molly Brown

What do elementary schoolchildren and retired folks have in common? In the small town of Lexington, Virginia it's a garden where young and old grow together. Called the Roots and Shoots Intergenerational School Garden and housed at the Waddell Elementary School, this landmark

program is the brainchild of Molly and Dirck Brown.

As Roots and Shoots coordinators, this husband and wife team organizes 25 to 30 volunteers each year—ages 18 to 85—to provide a unique, garden-based learning experience for 300 students.

An NWF certified schoolyard habitat, the plot includes a theme garden for each grade designed to complement the children's classroom studies. For example, the 4th grade has the Colonial Herb Garden, which relates to their studies of Colonial Virginia.

The Browns have received numerous local and national awards for their inspiring work, including the American Horticultural Society's "Great American Gardener Award."

But for Molly and Dirck the real award is working with the children—to see the world through their eyes. "Working on colors with a kindergarten class last year, I asked if anyone could find something white growing in the garden," recalls Molly. "The class replied, 'Your hair, Mrs. Brown!'—the joy in our garden is endless." For more information, visit [www.rootsnshoots.info](http://www.rootsnshoots.info).

## Frogwatch USA™

No summer evening would be complete without them—the voices of frogs.

The deep-pitched call of the bullfrog, the resonating trill of the gray treefrog or the twang of the green frog.

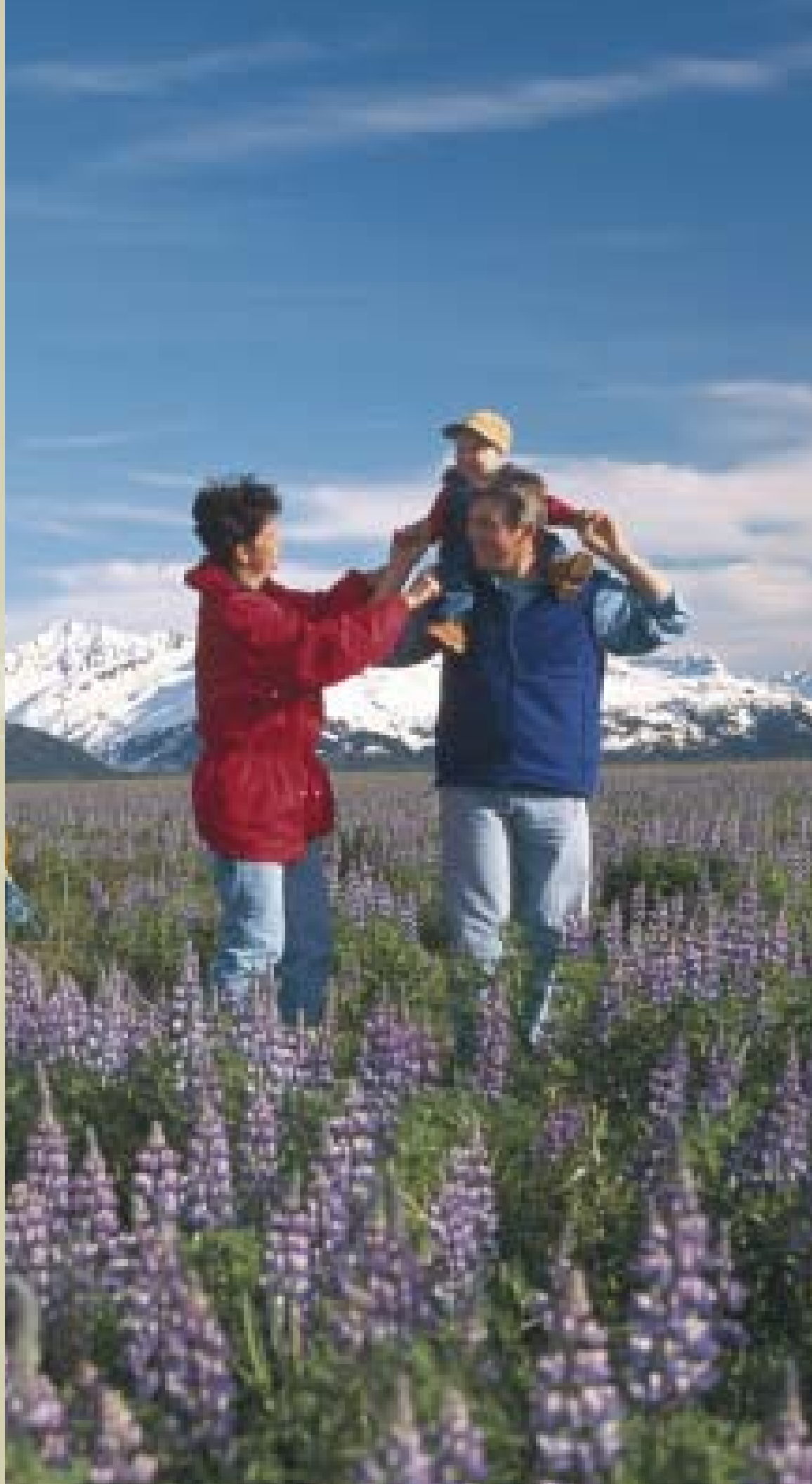
But frogs are more than summertime music. They are an indicator of the health of ecosystems.

Amphibians have porous skin that makes them especially sensitive to changes in their environment, and so they are the first to suffer the consequences of pollution, development, increased ultraviolet radiation and other threats.

To monitor the health of frog and toad populations throughout the country, NWF is partnering with the U.S. Geological Survey on the Frogwatch USA program, which recruits and trains volunteers to track frogs in their own communities. This past year, its fifth season, over 3,000 volunteers in all

50 states participated in Frogwatch USA. And NWF's eNature.com website introduced audio frog call recordings to help Frogwatch USA participants practice their frog identification skills.

Visit [www.nwf.org/frogwatchUSA/](http://www.nwf.org/frogwatchUSA/) to learn how you can be a volunteer.



than 60 schoolteachers to teach environmental subject areas and guide their students in environmental activities. We also translated new materials, including our *Creating a Schoolyard Habitat* curriculum, into Spanish. Next year, we plan to expand this initiative to train approximately 1,000 teachers in at least three locations across Mexico.

**Creating Our Future Conservation Leaders** ~ Each year, National Wildlife Federation hosts its annual Summer Institutes for high school students. The program is designed to increase participants' environmental literacy and build leadership skills.

In Atlanta, supported by The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, 27 students involved in NWF's Earth Tomorrow® program studied the water quality of the Chattahoochee River. With staff from NWF and our Georgia affiliate, participants completed landscape projects and developed conservation action plans for their school projects. NWF board member Jerome Ringo gave a keynote speech for the students and over 30 community partners.

Jerome also joined students, educators and local leaders for the seventh annual Summer Institute in Detroit. Activities included the dedication of Detroit's Riverside Park Community Wildlife Habitat, created in part by Earth Tomorrow students. NWF's Michigan affiliate staff also joined the efforts to teach students about local wildlife and outdoor skills.

Thousands of miles away, 25 Alaskan teens gathered at University of Alaska-Fairbanks to study the issue of subsistence, with a particular focus on toxins and water quality.



### **Gabriela Chavarría**

*NWF's Policy Director for Wildlife Conservation*

Dr. Gabriela Chavarría became a conservationist quite by accident. Born and raised in Mexico City, Gaby earned her degree in biology from the National University of Mexico. She received her master's and Ph.D. in Organismic and

Evolutionary Biology from Harvard University under the mentorship of world-renowned ecologist and educator Edward O. Wilson. Following her lifelong interest in bees and other pollinators, Gaby has conducted groundbreaking research on South American bumble bees.

After moving to Washington, D.C., she volunteered for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and got hooked. This was a field in which she felt she could make a difference.

With her knowledge, experience and passion for pollinators, coming to NWF was a natural migration for her. Gaby arrived at NWF a year ago and is applying her scientific knowledge to advocacy and field work, concentrating on a number of critical issues, including invasive species control, migratory birds, pollinator conservation, wildlife diseases and amphibian decline. Her close ties to scientists and key policymakers are helping to advance NWF's goal of uniting sound science with policy and education.

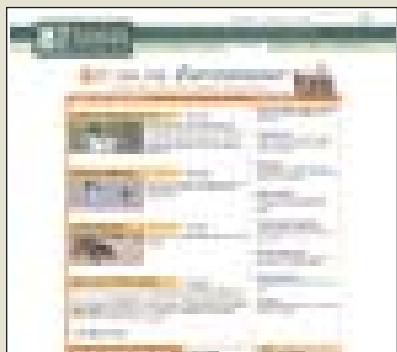
**The Home Depot®  
Helps NWF Inspire  
New Wildlife  
Supporters**

This year, NWF's partnership with The Home Depot officially rolled out nationwide, opening the way for us to reach millions of new aspiring wildlife supporters with our conservation message. Home Depot stores across the country began offering products, information and expertise to help homeowners and citizens transform their backyards and community spaces into wildlife-friendly habitats.



## Reaching New Audiences in New Ways

Introducing new audiences to conservation is a critical part of our mission. This year, we expanded our reach to families, schoolchildren, community leaders and citizens all over the country by distributing new and compelling materials through our websites, publications and film and television productions.



www.nwf.org's interactive webpage that allows visitors to take actions on behalf of NWF's conservation work.

**Wildlife on the Web** ~ Our website [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org) is visited by over 400,000 individuals each month and is an integral component to engaging people on behalf of NWF's mission through legislative, lifestyle and consumer actions. This past year, visitors used the website to send over 400,000 letters on behalf of issues like protecting wildlife, Arctic Refuge and the Clean Water Act. Over 10,000 people utilized the website's newly-enhanced online Backyard Wildlife Habitat planning and certification process to create their own wildlife-friendly habitat. The website also has engaged kids in online photo contests, provided teachers with curriculum and helped young adults become involved in community projects.

NWF's eNature.com continues to expand in popularity as the premier wildlife and nature website on the Internet with the number of visitors increasing by 42 percent last year. The site's online field guides—based on the popular *National Audubon Society Field Guides*—contain scientific information on more than 4,800 North American species. With eNature.com's zip code search capabilities, site visitors can quickly and easily identify their local plant and animal life. NWF is now producing field guides for PALM Personal Digital Assistants. The PALM guides are now available in retail stores and online.

**New e-partnerships** ~ eNature.com has paved the way for NWF to forge new partnerships to expand our reach. Our partnership with Yahoo!igans!®, Yahoo's® web guide for kids which offers *Ranger Rick Field Guides*, gets over 25,000 visitors every month. And, NationalGeographic.com uses eNature.com's *Local Wildlife Guide* on the animal section of its website, which invites visitors to search a database of 6,000 plants and animals.

**Educating and Engaging Online** ~ Thanks to a generous grant from the Surdna Foundation, NWF launched its Endangered Species Series this year as part of Wildlife University, the only online learning portal designed to advance conservation. The first two courses of an 18-course series are now available. They are "Nature's Fire Alarms" and "The Gray Wolf." Other courses will cover topics such as the bald eagle, the Karner blue butterfly and causes of species loss. Our goal is to move thousands of people from learning about the issues that impact endangered species to taking actions that make a difference.

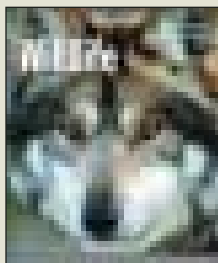
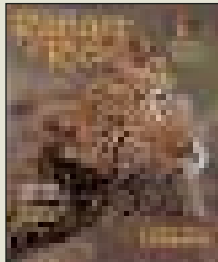
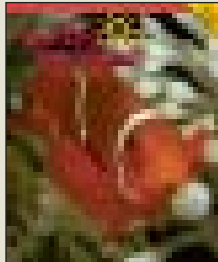
**Online Course on Buying Green** ~ Last year, thanks to the support of the Town Creek Foundation and Nathan Cummings Foundation, NWF's Campus Ecology® program used the power of information technology to host a web-based course on green consumerism. More than 90 participants from over 40 different colleges and universities, 13 nonprofits and one corporation participated in this groundbreaking "teach-in," taking away valuable information on how institutions can make informed, environmentally-preferable purchases of common products like paper, coffee, energy and wood materials. The course offered a one-hour, on-demand webcast followed by six online chats with green purchasing experts, including representatives from organizations such as Starbucks and New Leaf Paper.



NWF's eNature.com field guide on the PALM PDA



**Telling the Story on the Giant Screen** ~ In 2003, thousands of nature enthusiasts around the world experienced wildlife and wild places on the giant screen. Our large-format screen films included *India: Kingdom of the Tiger* and the highest attended giant screen film of 2003—*Coral Reef Adventure*, both of which played in IMAX® and other large-format theaters around the globe. Meanwhile, NWF continues to show our previously released *Wolves, Whales, Bears* and *Dolphins* large-format films to a variety of audiences worldwide. And *Giant Monsters*, NWF’s recent prime time special on Animal Planet®, was a finalist at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival.



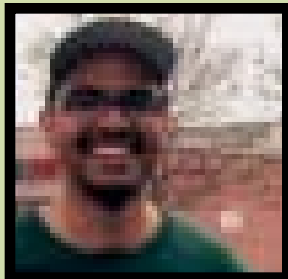
**Something for Everyone** ~ Each month, NWF’s award-winning magazines and their companion websites draw more than one million children, teens and adults into learning adventures and outdoor activities that are just right for their ages, interests and abilities.

*Wild Animal Baby*® was recently honored with an Association of Educational Publishers (AEP) award for Children’s Column and received the Gold Award in the Consumer Youth division. The magazine is designed to introduce children ages 1-3 years to nature and wildlife. In September, we released our first children’s programming video based on our *Wild Animal Baby* magazine.

*Your Big Backyard*®, for children ages 3-6, presents nature and wildlife in a creative and entertaining way, encouraging them to care for the Earth’s resources. This year, the magazine was a finalist for an AEP award for photography.

*Ranger Rick* received numerous honors, including the Parents’ Choice Gold Award and six AEP awards. *Ranger Rick* magazine and its companion *Go Wild!* website lead kids ages 7-12 to wild discoveries and mind-stretching fun. The NWF website offers a free online *Ranger Rick* educator’s guide to enhance and promote the use of the magazine in the classroom.

*National Wildlife* magazine was honored with a prestigious photo journalism award in the Natural History category in 2003. The publication is targeted to an adult audience, and provides the latest discoveries on wildlife and their habitats.



**Isiah Dalton**

What was once a typical manicured lawn on the campus of Chicago’s Wilbur Wright College (WWC) is now a native prairie garden and educational habitat—thanks to the vision and initiative of WWC sophomore and NWF Campus Ecology Fellow Isiah Dalton. As a Student Trustee with the

Board of the City Colleges of Chicago, Isiah wanted to organize a campus beautification project. “I was originally thinking of an arboretum or rose garden,” says Isiah. “With NWF’s guidance, we instead created a garden that includes over 100 native plants, supports local wildlife and educates students about the importance of green gardening.”

With a site in mind, Isiah mobilized a team of students, staff and faculty and secured in-kind contributions and supplies. He also developed partnerships with many local organizations and businesses, including the Chicago Botanic Garden. “When you grow up in inner-city Chicago, you don’t have a lot of exposure to wildlife and nature,” says Isiah. “I hope this garden raises awareness about the need to protect wildlife and how simple decisions, like choosing one plant instead of another, make a big impact.”