

Holiday Message
From the
Southeast Regional Director

At the holiday season, our thoughts often turn to things that matter most deeply to us—our families, friends, our faiths, and, if we are truly blessed, work that we love. At the heart of the “hustle and bustle” of the season is ultimately our desire to celebrate who and what we hold most dear.

Each of us does so in our own particular way. For some of us, it may take the form of a boisterous get-together with extended family that entails lots of food and exchanging of gifts. For others, it might be a long-awaited hunting trip with a best friend and the shared joy of the silence and beauty of nature. For some, it will be ensuring that remembrances reach loved ones who are far away, perhaps even serving in our military forces overseas. For still others, it could be a bed-side vigil with a loved one who is ill, or tending to the needs of strangers who simply need someone to care. For many, this is a religious season, a time to focus on the beliefs and values that have shaped our lives. And no doubt there are those among us for whom the holiday season will be a combination of these activities, or perhaps something altogether different. What matters is not so much what we do, but the spirit in which we do it. In our American tradition, the holidays are a time to look both inward to consider who and what we value, and outward to find the means to express our appreciation for those people and things that have blessed our lives.

For those of us in the Fish and Wildlife Service family, we are doubly blessed. In addition to the relationships that add so much meaning to our lives, we also have work that truly matters. When I look back over the last year at what we in the Southeast Region have accomplished for fish, wildlife, habitats and people, I stand in awe of your commitment. As we listen to news reports and public debate over the state of the environment, we can know with quiet assurance that what we do is making a difference in the Region, in the nation, and in the world.

As your Deputy Regional Director for the past nearly six years, I have asked a great deal of you, and you consistently met or exceeded the challenge. As your Regional Director, I realize that I am asking even more. I am asking you to meet the ever-growing 21st century assaults on sustainable populations of fish and wildlife and healthy ecosystems with 21st century tools and approaches. I am asking you not just for continued passion and dedication, but also for a commitment to continuously getting better at what we do and how we do it.

And I promise you something in return: I promise that I will ask nothing of you that I don't also ask of myself and all of the Region's leadership team. As together we make imagination and innovation the hallmarks of the Southeast Region in every program and at every field station, I also promise you that without a doubt we will share in the triumphant satisfaction that comes with knowing we gave our best in the worthiest of endeavors.

I wish each of you and those you love a wonderful holiday season filled with all that matters to you. I am proud every day to be working alongside friends and colleagues of such demonstrated character and competence. I look forward with eager anticipation to both the journey and the accomplishments that await us in the new year that lies ahead.

Cindy