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REFUGE MANAGER RECEIVES LEGENDS AWARD FROM AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION

WASHINGTON -- Mike Tansy, manager of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 95,000-acre Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, was presented with the Legends Award by the American Recreation Coalition in a ceremony here today, in recognition of "vision, commitment and stewardship in expanding outdoor recreational opportunities in America."

"We're very proud that Mike Tansy was selected for this very important recognition, and I know Mike will agree it reflects on the entire staff of Seney National Wildlife Refuge," said Rick Coleman, chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. "Mike and his staff have our gratitude and appreciation for their development of high-quality visitor programs."

Seney is one of more than 500 national wildlife refuges located throughout the United States and administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It has been in existence since 1935 and attracts more than 120,000 visitors each year to hunt, fish and to view waterfowl, more than 200 species of songbirds, sandhill cranes, bald eagles, osprey and loons. The refuge's marshes, bogs and hardwood, spruce and pine forests are also home to otter, black bear, porcupine and numerous small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

In the early 1990s, Seney adopted the slogan, "A Great Place to Watch Wildlife," which guided an intensive customer-based improvement effort that has included construction of three new wildlife observation platforms, a fishing platform and two exhibits, wildlife observation bicycling routes, installation of a visitor information radio broadcast, development of a hiking trail, new information kiosks and cross-country ski trails, among other projects.

Taking advantage of a corps of trained volunteers, Seney has increased environmental education efforts in area schools, an effort that has grown by 3,500 hours. In addition, a Children's Fishing Program last year was attended by 633 people, while the first Winter Snowfest drew 250 people -- in the middle of the winter's worst blizzard. The refuge has also instituted a "roving interpreter" program, staffed by volunteers, and a vigorous effort to record visitor opinion -- which has been running 95 percent positive.

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AMERICA'S NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES...
where wildlife comes naturally!

The presentation of the Legends Awards is part of the American Recreation Coalition's five-day Great Outdoors Award Celebration, designed to increase awareness and understanding of recreation issues. Since 1991, the ARC has used their yearly Washington meeting to recognize individuals from the Service, the Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.