



## PARTNERS IN FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

<http://www.partnersinflight.org>

April 2008

### 2007 PIF Awards

This year's awards were presented during the banquet at the PIF conference in McAllen. Awardees in the categories of Leadership, Stewardship and Public Awareness are:

#### *Leadership*

**John Alexander**, Executive Director for the Klamath Bird Observatory. Since 1992, upon founding KBO, John has worked in northern California and southern Oregon to implement all aspects of Partners in Flight. John's commitment to implementing PIF monitoring and research objectives has resulted in one of the country's most substantial long-term bird monitoring and research datasets in the world. He also helped create the Landbird Monitoring Network of the Americas. John's publications have forwarded PIF's approach to informing conservation with science. His tireless work with universities, NGO's, and regional schools to promote bird conservation; his international coordination with bird banding in Costa Rica; and his dedicated work on state and local PIF committees is highly commendable.

**Larry Neel**, Nevada Division of Wildlife, for his widespread work on bird conservation in the Great Basin. Larry has been a leader in PIF for almost 15 years. Larry co-authored of the early Nevada PIF strategy which set the course for Nevada bird conservation; participated on the Nevada Intermountain West Joint Venture Steering Committee and contributed to the JV plan that integrates recommendations from all bird initiatives; Co-founded the Great Basin Bird Observatory, raised funds, hired the Executive Director, and pushed for funding of the NV Breeding Bird Atlas; chaired the PIF Western Working Group for the last four years. We also note Larry's exceptional and colorful skills in facilitation.

#### **Partners in Flight Mesoamerica National Coordinators**

**José Manuel Zolotoff-Pallais** – Nicaragua

**Pablo Elizondo** – Costa Rica

**Luis Pineda and Wilfredo Rodriguez** – El Salvador

**Daniel Tenez** – Guatemala

**Francisco Aceituno** – Honduras  
**Beatriz Schmitt and Karla Aparicio** – Panama

The goal of PIF Meso is to contribute to the conservation of Mesoamerican avifauna through the different activities of the Mesoamerican members, and to establish a bridge of mutual cooperation with the different institutions in North America. A few examples of activities undertaken by PIF Meso include promotion of and contribution to *La Tangara*, the bilingual newsletter of the Partners in Flight International Working Group, Implementation of the MoSI (Monitoreo de Sobrevivencia Invernal) Program, in collaboration with The Institute for Bird Populations, which measures over-wintering survival of migratory birds in the Neotropics, and Development of Important Bird Areas Programs in all countries throughout the region. It should be noted that, at this point in time, PIF Meso is the only official PIF working group outside the U.S., and the PIF Meso National Coordinators are the only official and active PIF positions outside the United States.

### ***Stewardship***

**Martha Isabel “Pati” Ruiz Corzo** of Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda has worked for the past sixteen years to protect the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve, which encompasses almost 400,000 ha of diverse bird habitat in Mexico, from semi-desert to cloud forest. More than 360 bird species have been identified within the biosphere reserve, along with a suite of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and butterflies. Protection of this reserve has been made possible in part to the tireless efforts of Pati. She has focused her efforts on motivating the 600 communities and 100,000 inhabitants of the region to take part in preserving their natural resources. Pati's work has resulted in the creation of a grassroots environmental movement that has transformed the natural resources management practices of the local population and reoriented public investment from government authorities. The Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda, which she and her husband founded, addresses the survival needs of the 100,000 men, women and children living in this biosphere by promoting alternative economic approaches while preserving the area's endangered ecosystem. As a result of its visible success, in 1997, the Mexican government designated the area as the first federally protected reserve in Mexico.

**Fundación ProAves** is a nonprofit membership-based NGO in Colombia established in 1998. Its mission is to protect birds of conservation concern and their habitats across Colombia via research, direct conservation action, and community outreach. ProAves currently has 65 full-time professional staff (all Colombian), and 21 conservation programs in progress. It works in partnership with over 60 cooperation agreements and 20 institutional agreements. Just a few examples of their many accomplishments include:

Data from ProAves has been crucial in understanding the non-breeding distribution and ecology for many migrants, especially the Cerulean Warbler and Golden-winged Warbler

Established the first migratory bird reserve in Latin America – the Cerulean Warbler Bird Reserve;

Owens over 37,000 acres in 11 bird reserves (identified for migratory and resident birds);

Was crucial in establishing two new National Parks in Colombia, protecting 440,000 acres;

Established the first ecological easement in Colombia with many more planned that specifically protect shade coffee and forest for migrants;

Organized the 4<sup>th</sup> Migratory Birds Festival with more than 7,000 participants.

Established the Andean Migratory Bird Festival campaign celebrated in Colombia (awareness to an estimated 1 million people), Ecuador and Peru.

### **Public Awareness**

**Flying WILD** is a national bird education initiative, initiated in 2004 by the Council for Environmental Education. Flying WILD is currently being distributed in 18 cities by a variety of organizational sponsors. The program introduces middle school students to bird conservation through classroom activities and environmental stewardship projects. Flying WILD encourages schools to work closely with conservation organizations, community groups, and businesses involved with birds to implement school bird festivals and bird conservation projects. Students take the lead in teaching their classmates and community about migratory birds. Since its inception, Flying WILD has trained 8,478 educators with a combined reach to 212,175 students.

**Dr. Jeffrey Wells** has dedicated his life to the conservation of North America's migratory bird populations with service in a number of conservation organizations and coalitions, including PIF. In recent years he has devoted his energies to raising awareness of the conservation values of the Boreal Forest—North America's largest remaining unfragmented forest ecosystem—for billions of migratory birds as part of a strategic campaign for implementation of an initiative to protect over 600 million acres of the Canadian Boreal Forest. In October 2007, Jeff published *Birder's Conservation Handbook* through Princeton University Press. The book is receiving tremendous praise by bird conservationists.

### **4<sup>th</sup> International PIF Conference in McAllen – Success!**

Nearly 700 people attended the 4<sup>th</sup> International PIF conference, and well over 100 were from outside the U.S. Forty-five sponsors contributed over \$125,000 in support. There were nearly 500 oral and poster presentations. PIF will produce a **Needs Assessment** that outlines the highest priority needs from each of the conference's 39 pre-planned sessions. Needs are currently being compiled.

This will be widely distributed in electronic format, and partners will then begin to seek funding and other support to meet those needs. The PIF Implementation Committee will have the main responsibility for overseeing and tracking success. PIF will also produce a **proceedings** which will be made available electronically and in limited numbers of hardcopy. Guidelines for papers and a timeline continue to be located on the PIF web site.

### **Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants**

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne announced nearly \$4.5 million in federal grants to support neotropical migratory bird conservation in the United States, Canada, Mexico and many Latin American and Caribbean countries. The USFWS will provide 37 grants to conservation partnerships in those countries. Partners will match those funds with more than \$15 million that will be used to conduct research, monitoring, and management programs for migratory bird populations, as well as related outreach and education. The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 2000 established the matching grants program to fund projects promoting the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds in the United States, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Funds can be used to protect, research, monitor and manage bird populations and habitat, as well as to conduct law enforcement and community outreach and education. By law, at least 75% of the money goes to projects in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada, while the remaining 25% can go to projects in the US. See details at <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NMBCA/index.shtm>.

### **Birds Forever**

In the 2009 President's budget request, the Department of the Interior launched the Birds Forever initiative. It includes an increase of \$8.0 million to support targeted planning and broad-scale activities to address threats to bird species. The initiative supports the President's October 20, 2007, announcement where he highlighted his support for migratory bird conservation and working across international borders to conserve shared species. More information is available at <http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/birdsforever.html>

### **International Migratory Bird Day 2008 Approaching Fast**

"Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitat and People," is the theme for International Migratory Bird Day 2008. This year International Migratory Bird Day will explore the birds that make these fantastic journeys, the habitats on which they depend, and the people who are important to the conservation of birds and their habitats along the way. The 2008 theme provides a wonderful opportunity to recognize locally important habitats and the groups and individuals that contribute to their conservation. By visiting ([www.birdday.org](http://www.birdday.org)) you can learn more about this year's theme, gather ideas for sponsoring your own event, register an event, or locate an event near you. While most events will take place

on May 10, 2008, we encourage you to organize your program, event, or festival when it best suits you and the birds. IMBD materials are not dated and may be used year-round. In Latin America and the Caribbean, IMBD is celebrated in the fall, when migratory birds have returned to non-breeding grounds. So no matter where you are in the Western Hemisphere, you might find an IMBD event near you!

### **PIF Continental Plan Update**

The PIF Science Committee (SC) met on 28-29 March 2008 outside Phoenix to discuss the update of the PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan. This update will include all the landbirds of Mexico, Hawaii, U.S. territories in the South Pacific, Puerto Rico and the U.S Virgin Islands. The details are far from being complete, but it's clear that this update will not simply be a copy of the 2004 version with a larger species pool. A number of new approaches will be employed to deal with the large variety of species, ecologies, and conservation messages. The SC will also be spending more time identifying target audiences and more specific messages for them, building on the approaches being crafted by the Bird Education Network and the Bird Education Alliance for Conservation. We expect to again employ tables and maps per the 2004 plan to provide both detailed data and quick visual images of major concepts. We have a target of about 18 months for putting the update on the streets.

### **Landbird Continental Plan User Survey**

The Klamath Bird Observatory (<http://www.klamathbird.org/>) is taking the lead in designing a user survey that will go out to all users of the PIF North American Landbird Conservation. The survey is being professionally designed to help us create an even more useful product in this next round. We want to know who you are, how you use this document, what you liked, and what you would like to see dropped, changed or added. You will be able to complete this painlessly on line through Survey Monkey. Please watch for this survey and let us know what you want!

### **Request for Proposals: 2009 Multistate Conservation Grant Program**

The Multistate Conservation Grant Program (MSCGP) is soliciting Letters of Intent for the 2009 cycle of this competitive grant program. Note that the Bird Conservation Committee National Conservation Need (NCN) was combined with the climate change NCN. The NCN still contains specific language on conservation design and monitoring but also contains significantly more language on climate change. Also note the NCN on conservation provisions of the farm bill. The deadline for letters is midnight EDT Friday, May 2, 2008) For more application information, see [http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate\\_grants.html](http://www.fishwildlife.org/multistate_grants.html).— Deb Hahn ([dhahn@fishwildlife.org](mailto:dhahn@fishwildlife.org)).

## **Mesoamerican Society for Conservation and Biology**

PIF is poised to sign an agreement with the MSCB whereby we will delineate areas of common interest to be pursued together. One component will be to ensure a robust participation of PIF in the MSCB annual conferences. Particular symposia, training, and keynote addresses have already been discussed in some detail for El Salvador in 2008 and for Belize in 2009. The PIF Mesoamerican Working Group will play an ever stronger role in this relationship.—Carol Beidleman ([Carol\\_Beidleman@partner.nps.gov](mailto:Carol_Beidleman@partner.nps.gov)) and José M Zolotoff-Pallais ([zolotoff@ibw.com.ni](mailto:zolotoff@ibw.com.ni))

## **Improving the Understanding of Winter Ranges for High-priority Migrants**

As a result of a PIF symposium on this topic at the Neotropical Ornithological Congress in Venezuela in May 2007, PIF has received a proposal from NatureServe to help us better define the winter ranges of five high-priority species: Olive-sided Flycatcher, Bay-breasted Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler and Canada Warbler. Quite simply, we cannot take effective conservation action in non-breeding habitat if we don't know where the birds are. Ongoing work on the winter ranges of Cerulean and Golden-winged Warblers will inform field and modeling work on the new species. The proposal continues to be refined through discussions with NatureServe and other partners. We hope that this approach, if successful, can be extended to other species with poorly known winter ranges and habitats.—Terry Rich ([terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov))

## **Costa Rican Bird Route**

The Rainforest Biodiversity Group (RBG - <http://www.greatgreenmacaw.org/>) has just finished developing the Costa Rican Bird Route. The route consists of 12 sites in northeastern Costa Rica, most of which consist of private lands being conserved in hopes that ecotourism funds will replace those previously derived from grazing and logging. A diverse group of partners ran an evaluation of the route in early March, and we all agree that it is extremely well thought out and enjoyable. The route opened to the public this in April 2008. PIF sees this as an ideal model for elsewhere in Costa Rica and Central America. Anyone can visit one or more sites on their own schedule or join a small group tour. Contact the RBG if you are interested. Highly recommended!—Terry Rich ([terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov))

## **Birds of Conservation Concern – 2008**

The 1988 amendment to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act mandates the USFWS to “identify species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.” Birds of Conservation Concern 2008 (BCC 2008) is the most recent effort to carry out this

mandate. The overall goal of this report is to accurately identify the migratory and non-migratory bird species (beyond those already designated as federally threatened or endangered) that represent our highest conservation priorities. The geographic scope of this endeavor is the United States in its entirety, including island "territories" in the Pacific and Caribbean. BCC 2008 encompasses three distinct geographic scales—North American Bird Conservation Initiative Bird Conservation Regions, USFWS Regions, and National—and is primarily derived from assessment scores from three major bird conservation plans: Partners in Flight, the United States Shorebird Conservation Plan, and the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. Watch for an announcement of the release of BCC 2008.

### **BEAC and BEN**

Two new entities have emerged from the bird education working group – the Bird Education Alliance for Conservation (BEAC) and the Bird Education Network (BEN). BEAC is operating as an open partnership, much as PIF itself, while BEN has been set up as a standing committee of the Council for Environmental Education. Both groups will provide educators working in the field of bird conservation with a variety of new tools and strategies they can employ to be more effective. Web sites, strategic plans, listservs, conferences and other items have been completed or are in the works. Watch for details as they are announced and plan to contribute!

### **PIF Species Accounts Page**

The Species Account page has recently been updated on the PIF website. The updated page has links to online species accounts, particularly those that provide information about bird responses to management activities. Those who have used this page will see that I've consolidated the information into four basic areas: 1) accounts from TNC/ConserveOnline, 2) USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center accounts for wetland and grassland bird species, 3) USFWS species accounts from species status assessments, focal species accounts, and recovery plans, and 4) info about BNA Online and the BNA numbers. Please let me know of any additional species accounts available from any of these sources. Go to ([www.partnersinflight.org](http://www.partnersinflight.org)); click on Other PIF Resources; click on Species Accounts.—Janet Ruth ([janet\\_ruth@usgs.gov](mailto:janet_ruth@usgs.gov))

### **Bird Safe Building Guidelines**

The New York City Audubon Society recently published a very useful outreach publication entitled "Bird Safe Building Guidelines." It gives background on how collisions occur and provides simple to sophisticated techniques for reducing collisions geared toward numerous audiences. It can be found on-line at <http://www.nycaudubon.org/home/BirdSafeBuildingGuidelines.pdf>. —Sue Thomas ([Sue\\_Thomas@fws.gov](mailto:Sue_Thomas@fws.gov))

## **Western Working Group Action Plan**

PIF's Western Working Group has recently adopted and begun acting on a Five-Year Action Plan 2008-2012. This plan includes a number of both useful and fun actions such as the development of decision support tools, species-habitat modeling, and the monitoring of species such as Flammulated Owls, Black Swifts and border birds (MX-US border). The next working group meetings will be in Sierra Vista, AZ (fall 2008) and British Columbia (spring 2009). If you are in western North American and not participating in this working group, you are missing the boat! Copies of the plan are available from the chair, Rex Sallabanks ([rsallabanks@idfg.idaho.gov](mailto:rsallabanks@idfg.idaho.gov)).

## **IUCN Species Vulnerability Traits**

Last October, a four-day Species Vulnerability Traits workshop was hosted jointly by Imperial College London, IUCN Species Programme, IUCN Species Survival Commission and the Zoological Society of London. The workshop aimed to identify the traits that predispose species to elevated vulnerability to extinction, particularly due to the impacts of climate change. The workshop was attended by 31 biologists whose expertise spanned a broad range of taxonomic groups and biodiversity-threatening processes. Participants identified, discussed and eventually reached consensus on a list of traits that are generally indicative of species' vulnerability to extinction across all taxonomic groups and due to a range of threats. These will form the basis of a project to update the data collection structures and guidelines for the IUCN Red List.

This report and the table of traits were recently distributed to PIF committees and discussed during a meeting of the USFWS Nongame Bird Program. We continue to explore the possible usefulness of assessing landbirds using this approach. Note that this assessment is independent of the habitats occupied by the species. Anyone interested in seeing the report or in participating in such an assessment should contact Terry Rich at [terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov).

## **Western Juniper Field Guide: Asking the Right Questions to Select Appropriate Management Actions**

The goal of juniper management is to restore ecosystem function and a more balanced plant community that includes shrubs, grasses, and forbs, and to increase ecosystem resilience to disturbances. Developing a management strategy can be a difficult task due to uncertainty about how vegetation, soils, hydrologic function, and wildlife will respond to treatments. The subject guide is available in pdf format on the USGS website ([URL:http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1321/](http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1321/)).

## **Pollinators in Natural Areas: A Primer on Habitat Management**

Pollinators in Natural Areas: A Primer on Habitat Management provides a summary of how land and wildlife managers can provide and protect habitat for bees, butterflies and other pollinators. Specifically, this 8-page booklet reviews the potential impacts of fire, grazing, mowing, herbicides, and insecticides. It then provides a series of recommendations for how land managers can adjust the use of these management actions to benefit pollinators. To download the primer or to purchase a copy please visit:

([http://www.xerces.org/pubs\\_merch/Managing\\_Habitat\\_for\\_Pollinators.htm](http://www.xerces.org/pubs_merch/Managing_Habitat_for_Pollinators.htm)).—  
Scott Hoffman Black ([sblack@xerces.org](mailto:sblack@xerces.org)).

## **MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

### **Third WHMSI Conference**

The third conference of the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative will be held in Asuncion, Paraguay, on 22-25 July 2008. As in the first two WHMSI Conferences (2003, 2006), we hope that representatives from the governments of all countries in the hemisphere, as well as non-governmental organizations and conventions interested in the conservation of migratory species, will attend. General information and background on the initiative can be found at [http://www.fws.gov/international/WHMSI/whmsi\\_about.htm](http://www.fws.gov/international/WHMSI/whmsi_about.htm). For conference details, contact Marina Sansostri Ratchford ([marina\\_ratchford@fws.gov](mailto:marina_ratchford@fws.gov)).

### **AOU, COS, and SCO Joint Annual Conference**

The American Ornithologists' Union, Cooper Ornithological Society and Society of Canadian Ornithologists will meet jointly in Portland, OR on 4-8 August 2008. This is the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AOU, so there will be even more festivities than usual. See <http://www.pdxbirds08.org/> for details.

### **Next PIF National Committee Meetings**

The next PIF national committee meetings will be held on 5-12 September, both before and during AFWA's 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY (<http://www.fishwildlife.org/annualmeet.html>). In addition to the usual PIF meetings - Implementation Committee, Federal Agency Committee, AFWA Joint PIF/Shorebird/Waterbird Committee, PIF Council - and the host of related AFWA committee meetings, e.g., Bird Conservation Committee, we will also hold a Science Committee meeting to continue work on the update to the C Plan. As always, everyone is welcome to participate.—Terry Rich ([terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov))

### **BirdLife World Conservation Conference**

BirdLife International's 2008 World Conservation Conference and Global Partnership Meeting will be held on 22-27 September 2008 in Buenos Aires. This global event will gather the 108 national conservation organizations that make up the BirdLife International Network, plus their existing and potential collaborators and supporters. The agenda will cover a wide range of current environmental issues, ranging from climate change to key biodiversity areas, from Species Champions to flyways conservation, from global landscapes to local conservation groups. It will empower the BirdLife Partners to adopt and launch their strategy and programs for the next 4-10 years, and provide the opportunity to share common problems and solutions to today's most urgent environmental challenges. For more information, see <http://www.birdlife.org/worldconference/>.

### **North American Association for Environmental Education**

NAAEE will hold its annual conference in Wichita, KS on 15-18 October 2008 (<http://www.naaee.org/conference/2008-conference>). Members of the bird education working groups will be presenting updated papers on various aspects of the bird education strategic plans. We continue to encourage bird conservationists to build the network with educators. If you play a role in bird education and outreach, consider getting involved in NAAEE and its activities.

### **Cerulean Warbler Summit 3/Golden-winged Warbler Summit**

The subject summit will take place 21–25 October 2008, in Bogotá and San Vicente de Chucurí, Colombia. The members of the Cerulean Warbler Technical Group, El Grupo Cerúleo, and the members of the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group, Alianza Alas Doradas, are pleased to announce a meeting devoted to conservation planning for migratory and resident birds of the northern Andes. The summit will be held at the headquarters of the Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, in the town of San Vicente de Chucurí; and at the facilities of the Cerulean Warbler Bird Reserve, Colombia.

All persons interested in the conservation of migratory and resident birds in the Northern Andes and management of forest and agroecosystems for birds in the Northern Andes are invited to attend. For further information visit the home page of El Grupo Cerúleo (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/egc/>). For information on logistics and costs of the meeting, please see (<http://www.ecoturs.org>).—Paul B. Hamel ([phamel@fs.fed.us](mailto:phamel@fs.fed.us))

### **NCPIF Fall Meeting**

The fall North Carolina Partners in Flight meeting will be held on 5 November 2008 at Riverbend Park in Conover, NC. As with all fall meetings, this one will have a theme related to regional ongoing projects. This year will focus on the mountains and western piedmont.—Mark Johns ([johnsme@mindspring.com](mailto:johnsme@mindspring.com)).

## **National Association for Interpretation**

NAI will hold its annual national workshop in Portland, OR on 11-15 November 2008 (<http://interpnet.com/workshop/>). As with NAAEE (see above), we want to continue to build links to educators who can help us meet bird conservation needs.

## **La Sociedad Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación (SMBC)**

El XII Congreso se llevará a cabo en San Salvador, El Salvador, del 10-14 Noviembre 2008, y será organizado conjuntamente por la SMBC, la Fundación Ecológica de El Salvador SalvaNATURA, la Escuela de Biología de la Universidad de El Salvador y el Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales. Para los detalles, vea <http://www.smbcelsalvador2008.com/>.

## **25<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress 2010, Call for Proposals**

The 25<sup>th</sup> International Ornithological Congress will be held in Campos do Jordão, Brazil, 22-28 August 2010. The Scientific Program Committee (SPC) has been formed and a web page is in place (<http://www.i-o-c.org> or <http://www.ib.usp.br/25ioc>). The SPC invites you to submit symposium proposals for the next IOC. Symposia are to focus on the general ornithologist and provide up-to-date coverage of current ornithological research. Similar to the last IOC meeting, each symposium will include two keynote addresses that should summarize the global progress of ornithological science in the field over the last four years and address priorities for future research. The call for contributed papers will come in early 2009. **Proposals for symposia must be received on or before 1 June 2008.** Inquires may be made to the General for the Congress at [ioc2010@ib.usp.br](mailto:ioc2010@ib.usp.br) or to Carol Vleck ([ioc2010@iastate.edu](mailto:ioc2010@iastate.edu)).

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The next newsletter will be issued on 1 July 2008. Items are due 15 June 2008 to Terry Rich ([terry\\_rich@fws.gov](mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov)). The PIF Newsletter is assembled by Jina Mariani and Terry Rich.