

Blue Goose Alliance Bulletin

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Fulfilling the Promise Report Card

In October 2004, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published a progress report on implementation of the goals set in the 1999 vision publication "Fulfilling the Promise." The FWS addressed 42 individual goals in that report. The Chief of the Refuge System in the forward stated, "We've made incredible progress."

The Blue Goose Alliance Board of Directors commends the Service and Refuge Managers for the progress made to date. However, the BGA believes the Service's performance is somewhat less than "incredible." The experience of former refuge managers does not appear to warrant the upbeat assessment of the progress report. The BGA asked several recently retired senior refuge managers to complete a "report card" rating the progress made on achieving the identified goals.

They rated their observed progress on each of the 42 promises elements on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 = very little or almost no progress, 2 = some progress, 3 = satisfactory progress, 4 = good progress, and 5 = element accomplished. Additionally, they were asked to indicate how much progress they believe would have been made had the NWRS been under separate agency management status. While the results are subjective they do indicate that this group of recently retired senior managers felt that the NWRS would have fared notably better under separate agency management.

The results showed that the overall score of FWS progress was 2.40 or a grade of C. The overall score given to separate agency likely progress was 3.59 or a grade of B. Separate agency status was rated as likely to have resulted in more progress in 39 of the 42 goals. Scores in the 3 major categories were as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>FWS Grade</u>	<u>Separate Agency Grade</u>
Wildlife & Habitat	C- (2.32)	B- (3.26)
People	C (2.53)	B (3.54)
Leaders	C- (2.42)	A- (4.19)

Blue Goose Alliance President Bill Reffalt stated "The BGA completed these ratings using a limited-select sampling of former Senior Refuge Management personnel. It is believed that a wider sampling, though it might broaden the rating values within each of the two major groupings, would not materially change the relationships between the progress that has been achieved under the FWS constraints, and what likely would have been achieved under a National Wildlife Refuge Service. We believe the results offer strong indication that the NWRS would be far better off as a separate agency where the focus will be solely on top-notch administration and leadership, improved stature and integrity for the refuges, and a commitment to their dedicated and productive personnel."