

HIRAM M. CHITTENDEN AWARD FOR INTERPRETIVE EXCELLENCE

Executive Summary

Dana L. Matics **Natural Resources Specialist (Ranger)**

Dana Matics is a leader among her peers with exceptional character and organizational skills. She serves as the South Atlantic Division representative on the National Water Safety Team and as the Falls Lake representative on the Wilmington District Water Safety Team since its founding. These high profile positions along with her other responsibilities reflect the respect she has earned for her integrity, professional skills, devotion to duty, and selfless service. Some highlights from her recent work are described below.

Ranger Matics began her career with the Corps in 2000 as a cooperative education student. As a Student Trainee in Wildlife Biology, she worked several sessions at Falls Lake, alternating with academic sessions at Virginia Tech. After graduation in 2003, she was converted to career status with the Corps and worked as a ranger, converting to the professional Natural Resources Specialist series in 2006. She mentors and leads the ranger work force in outreach, recreation and natural resources management, and just this past year was responsible for the program areas of OMBIL, REC-BEST budget input, and volunteers as well as her major program area of interpretation and education.

Ranger Matics coordinates Seamoor the Water Safety Serpent for national use. As part of her Seamoor coordinator duties, she has improved shipping processes, coordinates Seamoor appearances nationwide and ensures that Seamoor is kept in good repair so that he can take his message across the country. She is in great demand as a Seamoor operator and has even operated Seamoor at a water safety booth in the Pentagon last summer.

Ranger Matics has worked extensively with volunteers from trail groups to prospective Eagle Scouts and has leveraged Corps resources through these groups to accomplish new facilities and improvements on a limited budget, all while instilling a stewardship ethic in the project participants. For instance, she coordinated a National Public Lands Day event last year that resulted in several new miles of hiking trail and footbridges on that trail.

Ranger Matics is an innovator. She has initiated a number of new interpretive programs, including the use of animal pelts and tracks to facilitate understanding of our native wildlife and adapted or designed several new programs in just the last year, including one on watersheds, "Birds and Worms", "Life on the Edge", and a lake turnover demonstration for all the Falls Lake staff to use. She wrote an extensive scope of work for new exhibits at the Visitor Center that will be used when funds are available.

For all these achievements and more, we proudly nominate Ranger Matics for the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.