

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wappapello Lake Project is proud to place Ms. Kathy A. Dickson into nomination for the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. Ms. Dickson was an interpreter long before she began working for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. A very talented professional artist, Kathy paints wildlife scenes so strikingly beautiful, anyone viewing them is compelled to seek more detail when on an outing in the outdoors. Her appreciation for natural resources is a way of life. She is sincere and dedicated to the principles of safety and education that come with this way of life. This combination of natural talent, sincerity, and dedication is what makes Kathy so good at increasing the public's understanding of the Corps mission and management goals. She is constantly striving to provoke customers to become better stewards of public lands and facilities through her own sincere appreciation for what they have to offer. She is enchanting in her effort and everyone loves "Ranger Kathy".

Ranger Kathy uses her artistic talent to design graphics for campaigns at all levels. She has contributed consistently to the National Water Safety Products Committee. Her exceptional creativity always brings forth a top quality product. She has served as a vital member of the Southeast Missouri (SEMO) Regional Water Safety council for the past 13 years. Kathy has successfully established 13 life jacket loaner stations on behalf of the council with six of those evolving in 2011. This year, she was instrumental in securing a grant for \$2000 and purchased 204 new life jackets that will be placed at life jacket loaner stations at 9 additional boat ramps in 2012! Kathy is always looking for ways to gain new partnerships and is well respected among our sister agencies.

Ms. Dickson staffs and manages the Bill Emerson Memorial Visitor Center. In 2011, she planned and designed a complete remodel of the building, which had not been improved since it was turned into a visitor center in 1996. She took advantage of an opportunity when she heard the local Fish and Wildlife Service was remodeling their visitor center and was able to walk away with free displays and materials they no longer needed. Kathy integrated them into her design as well as a number of wildlife mounts that were donated by a local family. She designed a children's area in the form of a small Ozark cabin with beautiful "views" from the windows. Kathy then surrounded the displays, cabin, and mounts with vividly realistic wildlife scenes throughout the building. With that touch, she has guaranteed there is not another visitor center like it! The visitor center was briefly turned back into an office during the great spring flood. It was more or less a cluttered mess that Kathy had to put back to her standards before opening to the public.

Kathy Dickson is a professional artist and her artwork is displayed in several galleries in the surrounding communities. She has worked with mentally and physically challenged folks at nursing homes and is a guest teacher at the local high school where she helps students fine tune their wildlife art for competition. She is currently working on a book about art technique for students that focus on wildlife art as well as commissioned pieces. She painted the portrait of Congressman Bill Emerson that graces the visitor center that bears his name. Modest and unassuming, Ms. Dickson shares her skills, talent, and love of wildlife as much as time allows.