

DECEMBER 2016

MAKING TRACKS

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE TUALATIN RIVER NWR

JOYFULLY CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY WITH THE WONDER OF THE REFUGE



PRESIDENT'S PERCH

By Tom Hartz, President of the Board



We survived a very wet October and are experiencing a rather warm fall season. The water on the refuge is rising and the migrating waterfowl are stopping by in large numbers for rest and nourishment. We've seen a lot of human visitors as well this fall, which is always great. It's satisfying to observe that, in spite of a tumultuous political season, the sun continues to rise, the rains continue to fall, and the animals

continue to do what they're programmed to do. The Friends of the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge and our partners with the Fish and Wildlife Service remain committed to our shared mission "to restore and protect Refuge habitats as well as provide wildlife dependent education and recreation."

The natural beauty that Americans share, enjoy, and sustain at our Refuges and National Parks should make us all very proud. The United States is singular as a populous and developed country that had the foresight to protect and nurture the natural beauty that we are blessed with. One hundred years ago, in August 1916, the National Park Service was created to preserve America's natural wonders. This year, we witnessed the power of a community to unite and support its local refuge when interlopers attempted to take over public lands at Malheur. The fact that the judicial system did not deliver the outcome we expected does not diminish the impact of what committed citizens can accomplish without violence. There will be changes proposed by our new political leadership which could have a significant impact on our public lands. We should pay close attention to what our elected officials are proposing and work with our local and regional representatives to assure that their constituents are being heard. That's how democracy works.

As we enter the holiday season, I ask you to reflect on what we are privileged to enjoy: our families, our freedom, our community, our environment. With privilege comes responsibility.

I hope you all enjoy a peaceful Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season. I encourage you all to walk off a few holiday calories at our Refuge. I look forward to seeing you.

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REFUGE UPDATE

Audubon's Annual Christmas Bird Count, Dec. 17th

The National Audubon Society invites birdwatchers to participate in the longest running citizen science survey, the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). On Saturday December 17th, birders and nature enthusiasts in Oregon will take part in the 1st annual CBC count for the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.

Each year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count mobilizes over 72,000 volunteer bird counters in more than 2,400 locations across the Western Hemisphere. The CBC utilizes the power of volunteers to track the health of bird populations at a scale that scientists could never accomplish alone. Data compiled for the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge CBC will record every individual bird and bird species seen in a specified area, contributing to a vast citizen science network that continues a tradition stretching back more than 100 years.

Birders of all ages are welcome to contribute to the fun, nationwide citizen science project, which provides ornithologists with a crucial snapshot of our native bird populations during the winter months. Each individual count is performed in a count circle with a diameter of 15 miles. The volunteers break into small parties and follow assigned routes counting every bird they see. Some people also watch bird feeders instead of following routes. While the Refuge will be a focal point of the day, many other natural areas in close proximity to the Refuge will be counted by our volunteer teams within our 15 mile circle.

To sign up for the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge count, please **e-mail Refuge Wildlife Biologist, Curt Mykut - richard_mykut@fws.gov**. Full details for the day will be made available in the coming weeks.

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is a citizen science project organized by the National Audubon Society. There is no fee to participate and the quarterly report, American Birds is available online. Counts are open to birders of all skill levels.

NATURE'S OVERLOOK STORE

Holiday Giving

Shop local. Give local. It's easy!

DECEMBER EVENTS

**Holiday Toy Drive--
Sherwood 4 Kids Sake**
Dec. 1-14, 10am - 4pm

**Nature's Overlook
Store Open House**
Dec. 3, 10am - 4pm

Waterfowl Watch
Dec. 3, 10am - noon

**Making the
Connection: Alaska
Refuges, Native Tribes
and TRNWR**
Dec. 6, 6:30pm - 8pm

Owl Prowl
Dec. 7, 6:30pm - 8pm

**Photo Society Monthly
Meeting**
Dec 8, 7:00pm



Sherwood 4 Kids Sake Help a Local Child Nov. 26 - Dec. 14

Nature's Overlook, the retail store in the Wildlife Center, is working with **Sherwood 4 Kids Sake** to fulfill the wishes of some local children.

It's easy...

- Pick a gift tag off the display. The child's gender, age and what they would like to have is on the tag. Most items can be found in Nature's Overlook. Purchases can be made elsewhere too, and returned here for pickup.
- Purchase the item, attach the tag and leave it with a store volunteer. That's all there is to it!

Sherwood 4 Kids Sake will pick up the donated items and deliver them to each recipient.



SOCIAL MEDIA



New Logowear, Just in Time for Holiday Shopping



Update your "Friendswear" with our new logo in great new colors. Members save during our annual Open House on December 3rd--get 20% off on all store merchandise THIS DAY ONLY.

Book Recommendation

Reviewed by Steve Runnels, Ornithologist

Great Grey Owl in California, Oregon and Washington

Peter J. Thiemann (author, photographer) Harry Fuller (author)
2015. 225 pages.

This is the first book to describe the habitat and habits of the Great Grey Owl. This owl's population along the Pacific Slope are the southernmost on earth and this book will unravel many of the mysteries of this elusive bird. There are chapters on where to find this owl in each of the states, as well as life history information, maps and over 100 full color images.

The Great Grey Owl is the most sought after bird on the Pacific Slope of North America. On December 17th, the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge will conduct its first Christmas Bird Count. As we cover the 15-mile circle, all eyes will be looking for this elusive bird.

Looking for a holiday gift? Then this book is a real treasure for everyone interested in the natural world. The book is available in Nature's Overlook Store at the refuge.

Wear in the World

John Schweitzer and his mother visited Ninety Six National Historic Site in South Carolina. Here "mom" is showing off her new Friend's logo T-shirt.



HELP THE
FRIENDS WHILE
YOU SHOP



PROGRAMS

Interpretation and Environmental Education

Sixteen volunteer naturalists attended the training for our new Forest Ecology field trip. The field trip explores the importance of forest and is aligned with the Oregon Forest Literacy Plan. The curriculum for this field trip was developed by our volunteers, spearheaded by Jim Burrows. Oregon Forest Resources Institute will reimburse bus transportation costs to the Refuge for future school groups participating in this field trip. - Seth Winkelhake



Restoration

The restoration crews are taking a break during December. The next restoration work day will be January 14th.

KID'S CORNER

Hey Kids! Bring your parents to the refuge and tell us what you saw. Take a photo, draw a picture, write a short story, pen a poem. Your creation could be published here in the newsletter, with your parents permission of course.

This month we have a drawing of a Great Blue Heron created by Spring. See you on the refuge!



PHOTO SOCIETY

Photo Society Fall Show

The fall show of images will be shown in the Riparian Room from December until early March. It was a tough competition, but the selection panel consisting of a refuge manager, a Friends Board member, and a Photo Society member selected 3 images from each of the categories. Each of the images must be made in Oregon or Washington. Sometime in late December we will be finalizing the means for you to purchase prints through the bookstore.



Tree. Copyright Don Nelson

Oak



Dahlia. Copyright Jim Nicholson

Photo Society Meet-up in the Gorge

Members of the Friends Photo Society visited the Columbia River Gorge to view some seldom-visited waterfalls on the Washington side. Braving the rain, they viewed Dog Creek Falls, Panther Creek Falls, Steep Creek Falls, Heaven and Hell Waterfalls, Upper Rock Creek Falls, and Lower Rock Creek Falls. The Photo Society is planning several additional meet-up trips this winter – come to the Photo Society Meetings the first Thursday of each month to find out more information.



Steep Creek Falls. Copyright Don Nelson

URBAN PROGRAM

What does “The Outdoors” mean to you?

By Mesha Wood

This land is our land, but what it means to love the outdoors may not be the same for you and me. From Latinos in Lycra, to Korean politicians finding votes on trails, NPR’s podcast *Code Switch* took a

look at stereotypes and truths about people of color and their relationships with the outdoors in their episode, "[Made for you and Me.](#)" (aired on June 7th, 2016).

Recently, Refuge and Friends staff had a listen to this podcast and engaged in thoughtful discussion afterwards about some of our own preconceptions and how we might broaden our acceptance of different outdoor perspectives. It was a healthy experience that we encourage the Friends to try as well.

When we see that 80-95% of visitors to many of our public lands are white, it's easy to fall back on the simple assumption that people of color must not be into the outdoors. The truth, it turns out, is far more complex. It starts with the understanding that for many people of color, our shared 562 National Wildlife Refuges, 58 National Parks, and 154 National Forests are not seen as places for them.

As a child, growing up in a large family in the Pacific Northwest, nature was our playground. We played outside all the time. When it came time to take a family trip or vacation, the Oregon Coast and camping was our go-to. What each of us got out of the trips was worth the process it took my parents to pack up seven kids, their bikes, tents, and food for a weekend at the beach. Our childhoods along the coast are much of the reason we all love the outdoors and find them to be an important part of our lives today.

But not everyone has these types of opportunities or upbringing. The outdoors can mean different things to different people, and not all of these meanings are positive.

The podcast discusses many people's strained relationships with the outdoors, including the pain of slavery, memories of segregated outdoor spaces, exclusion for dressing a certain way, and feeling unwelcome because no one participating in an outdoor activity looks like them.

Connecting with our growing urban audiences begins with understanding, and that starts with listening and asking questions. Taking the lead of Outdoor Afro, ask people what "the outdoors" is and be open to the answer. Does it include local parks, backyards, gardens, an empty lot? And what does it mean to them to connect with the outdoors?

Within these answers and our own feelings about urban nature and our beloved Refuges there are common threads that will help us expand our view of what the outdoors means. For instance, we know that simply getting there can be a hurdle, so Refuge and Friends staff at our Urban Refuges are working with current and future partners to coordinate safe transportation to not only our Refuges, but to other outdoor spaces closer to their communities.

So take a listen to Code Switch's "[Made For You and Me,](#)" then consider the partners and groups you are working with and think about how you and your organization can look beyond the Blue Goose to reach urban audiences in places they feel welcome.

FEEDBACK WELCOME

Please help us make this newsletter something you look forward to receiving by sharing ideas

and suggestions to improve the content. This is a work in progress, and we look forward to hearing from you! [Click here](#) to email us.

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